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Ontario Government making Post Secondary education more affordable



Premier Dalton McGuinty launches the new, '30% Off Ontario' Tuition grant at Wilfrid Laurier University

Starting Jan 5, 2012, Ontario students can get 30% off the cost of their tuition.

Premier Dalton McGuinty launched the new, 30% Off Ontario Tuition grant at Wilfrid Laurier University on Jan 5th -- meaning that eligible university or college degree students will receive \$800 while college diploma and certificate students will receive \$365 for this semester.

This September the permanent 30% off tuition grant will apply to the full school year. Students in a university or college degree program will save \$1,600, while students in college diploma and certificate programs will save \$730.

Because the grant is calculat-

ed to be 30% off the average Ontario tuition, the amount of the grant will keep pace with any increased future costs -- meaning it will always be 30% off the price of tuition.

More than 300,000 students are eligible to receive the grant this year. Students who already receive OSAP will have their applications submitted automatically.

According to media release by the Premier's office, helping Ontario students with the price of tuition is part of the McGuinty government's plan to help keep postsecondary education within the reach of all families while building the best-educated workforce in the world.



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Indian External Affairs Minister Krishna to Tour Sri Lanka

External Affairs Minister S M Krishna will visit Sri Lanka in January to discuss bilateral ties and security in the region, besides reviewing progress of a massive project undertaken by India for building 50,000 houses in the war-ravaged north for internally-displaced people.

Krishna "is to make an official visit to Sri Lanka on the 16th of this month," the Indian Government Information

Department said on Jan 3.

He will "discuss bilateral relations and security in the region," the department said in a web posting.

Krishna is also expected to check on the progress of the housing project undertaken by India in the regions in the island's north, sources in Sri Lanka's External Affairs Ministry told PTI.

India has extended assis-

tance for building 50,000 houses for resettlement of the internally-displaced people.

The Indian minister is also expected to hold bilateral talks with Sri Lankan leaders, including President Mahinda Rajapaksa and his counterpart G L Peiris.

Tamil party sources, meanwhile, said Krishna would be keen to follow the progress of ongoing talks between the Tamil

National Alliance and the government of Sri Lanka.

The Indian government recently expressed keenness to see full implementation of Sri Lanka's 13th amendment to the Constitution on devolution of powers and further efforts as part of the political negotiations towards reconciliation.

Analysts said the Sri Lankan government's latest statement highlighting its relaxed stance

on the Tamil party demand for police and land powers to provinces is being viewed with interest in the light of Krishna's proposed visit.

Cabinet spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella, in the statement, said that the government was willing to consider a proposal by the Tamil National Alliance on police and land powers.

- PTI

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Updated child car seat safety regulations come into force

OTTAWA — the Honourable Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health, on behalf of the Honourable Denis Lebel, Minister of Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, announced that updated child car seat safety regulations come into force on January 1, 2012.

"As a mom, I want to have confidence that my child is secured in the safest car seat available," said Minister Aglukkaq. "When these new regulations come into force on January 1, child car seats sold in Canada will meet Canada's highest testing standards and therefore will be as safe as possible."

The updated regulations are part of a regular process of reviewing child safety standards while using the most up-to-date technology available for testing. The updates include aligning elements with those in the United States and incorporating specific Canadian testing requirements. The major changes include:

- a new testing requirement using a three-point seatbelt to secure car seats in vehicles;
- changes to child seats' dynamic testing to adopt most of the U.S. testing parameters;
- changing the definition of an infant from 9 kg to 10 kg;
- an increase in the maximum allowable weight limit of child seats from 22 kg to 30 kg;
- introducing dynamic testing requirements for booster seats; and
- allowing harnesses to be certified for use on school buses by special needs children.

"Today's demonstration was a good reminder for Canadian parents to make sure that their child's car seat is installed according to the manufacturer's instructions and to ensure that their child is buckled in correctly every time," added Royal Galipeau, MP for Ottawa—Orléans.



Parents should be aware of the guidelines for child seats, ensure that their child is in the seat appropriate for his or her size, and ensure that seats are installed and used properly. More information can be found on Transport Canada's Keep Kids Safe Web page at www.tc.gc.ca/eng/roadsafety/safedrivers-childsafety-car-time-stages-1083.htm.

There is no need to replace a child seat as a result of these new standards. However, a child car seat should be replaced if it was installed in a vehicle involved in a collision. If the shell or materials on the seat are ripped or damaged, it should be replaced. Parents should also check the expiry date of the seat and be sure to replace it when it reaches that date.

These new regulations were published in the Canada Gazette, Part II, on May 12, 2010, giving manufacturers ample lead time to ensure that there were no supply disruptions to consumers while any necessary changes were made to meet the new regulations as of January 1, 2012.

Given that previous regulations have provided a high level of safety for children for many years, current child car seats will continue to provide excellent protection throughout their useful life.

Cancer drug slows tumour, fails to prolong life: Study

A drug, widely used to treat ovarian cancer, helps slow the tumour growth, but fails to prolong life expectancy of the patients, two major studies on the drug have found. "The amount of improvement seems to be relatively modest," said Amit Oza, an oncologist at the Princess Margaret Hospital in Toronto who led one of the studies to be published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

The smaller of the two studies, dubbed ICON7, followed 1,500 women in 11 countries. All the patients received standard chemotherapy and half received Avastin for up to 10 months after chemotherapy.

In the Avastin patients, the drug halted the growth of their tumours for an extra month and a half.

The other study of 1,800 women used a higher dose of Avastin added to chemotherapy. The women who continued receiving Avastin for 10 months after chemotherapy experienced an extra four months of slow to no growth in their tumours compared with the women who received no Avastin.

But slowing the tumours did not delay death from ovarian cancer. While the larger study, conducted by the National Cancer Institute-supported Gynaecologic Oncology Group, continues to collect data, the Avastin patients have not survived any longer than the other patients.

Even these modest results energised patient advocates, who point to the lack of new treatments for ovarian cancer, which causes some 15,000 annual deaths in the United States as the eighth most common cancer among women.

"While we are looking for that silver bullet, this is a gift that shouldn't be overlooked," said Karen Orloff Kaplan, chief executive of the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance.

Data on survival are still being collected, but the results are probably too disappointing for the drug's maker, Genentech, to seek Food and Drug Administration approval of Avastin for ovarian cancer, said company spokeswoman Charlotte Arnold. -

PTI

Ontario Making Resuming Former Last Name Easier McGuinty Government Cutting More Red Tape

Ontario is making it easier for men and women to legally switch back to their former last names after the end of a marriage.

Previously, those who chose to switch back to their former last names, after the end of a marriage, had to file a request within 90 days at a cost of \$25. If they did not, they had to go through a longer, more complex name change process that cost \$137.

A new provision that takes effect tomorrow removes the 90-day time limit and will only cost \$25 -- meaning switching back to a former last name is easier and less of a financial burden.

Cutting government red tape for Ontarians is part of the McGuinty government's commitment to make it easier for families and businesses to access government services.

"The last thing people should have to think about when going through a difficult time is government red tape. We're pleased to be able to make things easier for people during that time."

- Harinder Takhar

Minister of Government Services

The change to the Change of Name Act only applies following a divorce, annulment or death of a spouse.

This does not impact people who



Harinder Takhar
Minister of Government Services

assumed a last name as a result of marriage and did not legally change their last name.

Many people do not elect to change their name legally after they get married and simply assume their spouse's surname or combine or hyphenate their surnames at the time of marriage.

Effective January 1, 2012, amendments to the Pension Benefits Act and the Family Law Act will make it easier for couples to value and divide a pension in the case of marriage breakdown.

Public Meeting of all Sri Lankan Pensioners living in Canada

A public meeting of all Sri Lankan Pensioners, living in Canada is organised by the Ontario Sri Lankan Pensioners Association (OSPA), along with its second Annual General Meeting at the Scarborough Civic Centre Council Chambers at 9.30 A.M. on Monday, 16th January, 2012 to consider

(i) The difficulties faced by the Pensioners after September, 2009 in receiving their normal pensions

(ii) Non receipt of allowances and pension anomalies granted by the Government to all Pensioners in its budget proposals of 2010, 2011 and 2012

And

(iii) Pensioners' other grievances.

All Pensioners, irrespective of membership in the OSPA are kindly requested to participate in this meeting and express their views.

Any further information may be obtained by contacting:

President of OSPA -

Mr.R.S.Jogendra

- Telephone 647 285 9336 or

Vice President Mr.G. Stanley de

Silva - Telephone 416 293 8592 or

Mr.R. Ragupathy

- Telephone 416 431 4360 or

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Happy New Year and Five outfits with growth potential in 2012

Contributed by

Tashvir Narine, B.Sc. Hons.

The holidays have ended and last year is now a recent memory. In terms of the global economy, factors such as the Euro debt crisis stand out and still have a definite impact today.

As the global economic train struggles to chug along in many frontiers, starting a small business is increasingly an option. For many small businesses in Canada, 2012 is also an opportunistic time to turn the pages on 2011 and look towards expanding or taking on new adventures in this New Year.

Recently Globe and Mail, the nationally distributed Canadian Newspaper looked ahead to five prominent industries worth exploring in 2012 for small business Canadian undertakers. While the International Franchise Industry Business Report listed business lines such as personal care services, transportation, entertainment and recreation to yield greater output in 2012, the Globe and Mail's report indicates that we look between the lines to taking advantage of the special needs of our evolving population.

1. Elder Care – From as far back as we can remember baby boomers have been a topic in economic discussions. However, trends are indicating that seniors are choosing to stay longer in their residences. This creates a greater need for home care in years to come, with the continuous advancements in medicine and technology, coupled with the fact that mobility would also be shortened at this time.

2. Health and Wellness – Since the new millennium, individuals are more interested in being healthy and living heartier lifestyles. This is also a good chance for businesses to explore, as more food consumers are avoiding un-healthy choices and

choosing different types of retail outlets based on menu choices and products.

3. Warehousing – Technology is also surprisingly creating openings in physical storage enterprises. With connectivity increasing worldwide, more companies are trying to slim down operating costs and eliminating unnecessary spaces. Small businesses are now looking to provide cheaper alternatives to these larger enterprises' storage needs.

4. Shipping/Logistics – Whether by sea or land, more companies are transferring goods to clients via electronic internet sales. Consumers are looking for convenience in shopping now more than ever, so there is greater need for larger companies to have shipping and logistics departments established, or subcontract to a smaller business to handle this commitment.

5. Outsourcing/Staffing –

Temporary staffing has seen an increase in popularity along with outsourcing in the past few years, and most experts predict that this is another trend that could continue. With the creation of temp jobs, larger organizations can now eliminate costs by saving on higher salaries and benefits.

Also, technology has made it possible for businesses to use cheaper workforces overseas, so there is another opportunity here for local small businesses to connect these two networks. It is not easy beginning any of the endeavours mentioned above. Any opportunity requires research and planning, and not every area may display a need for these types of businesses.

Monsoon Journal wishes, that 2012 is a prosperous time for everyone, in your new venture or continuing the existing endeavours, and best of luck in the years to come.

Pope Benedict XVI names 22 new cardinals, including Toronto archbishop

Toronto Archbishop Thomas Christopher Collins is among 22 new cardinals of the Roman Catholic Church named by Pope Benedict XVI, the Vatican announced Friday.

Collins, 64, originally from Guelph, Ont., was appointed Toronto's archbishop in 2007 and becomes the 16th Canadian cardinal in the history of the church.

"To be a member of the College of Cardinals, really, is a great honour and I'm very grateful for it," Collins told radio station AM640.

"It has quite a history down through the ages. The cardinals have played an important role ... in world history."

Cardinals are the pope's top advisers, the elite group of churchmen who will eventually elect Benedict's successor. Of the 22, 18 are under the age of 80 — raising to 125 the number of cardinals eligible to vote in the next papal conclave.

The list includes two Americans: Archbishop Timothy Dolan of New York and Archbishop Edwin O'Brien, Grand Master of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre and the for-



**Toronto Archbishop
Thomas Christopher Collins**

mer archbishop of Baltimore.

The 84-year-old pope named 16 Europeans as cardinals, including seven Italians. He also named Joao Braz de Aviz, a Brazilian who heads the Vatican office for religious life; John Tong Hon, bishop of Hong Kong; and George Alencherry, archbishop of the Syro-Malabar church in India.

The pope announced the names "with great joy" following an Epiphany Mass that ended the Vatican's main Christmas celebrations. He said they will be formally elevated at a Feb. 18 ceremony in Rome.

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Around the world

Japan to Help India Prop Up Rupee

Japan has agreed to help provide some relief for India's troubled currency.

Officials say Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda agreed to a \$15-billion currency swap arrangement with New Delhi during a visit there recently. The deal is expected to help stabilize the value of the Indian rupee, which has been losing value and is one of Asia's worst-performing currencies.

Japan's Kyodo news agency also says the two leaders agreed their countries would conduct joint naval exercises next year.

Noda is in India for two days of meetings with Indian officials.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh welcomed Noda on Dec 28 with a colorful ceremonial reception at the



India's Prime Minister Manmohan Singh (R) speaks during a joint news conference as his Japanese counterpart Yoshihiko Noda looks on after their meeting in New Delhi, December 28, 2011
— pic via Reuters

majestic red sandstone presidential palace.

Prior to the meeting, Noda had said Japan was looking to strengthen relations with India in various fields, including economics and security – VOA News

India Opens Stock Markets to Individual Foreign Investors

By Anjana Pasricha

India is hoping to attract more overseas funds as it opens its stock markets to individual foreign investors for the first time, but it may not be easy as the allure of the Indian stock markets fades amid a faltering economy.

Starting January 15, the government has announced that individual foreign investors can directly buy and sell Indian equities. Earlier, they could only invest through mutual funds or institutional investors.

Officials hope the move will reverse last year's trend that saw foreign investors pulling out billions of dollars from the Indian economy. The government also wants to reduce market volatility.

But many economists say it is not likely to have an immediate impact at a time when Indian equities have been ranked among the world's worst performers after losing as much as one quarter of their value in the last year.

Anushree Sinha is an economist at the National Council of Applied Economic Research.

"If the market is not very healthy, then the investors will worry, and I don't think it will happen so smoothly, Sinha stated. "So I think we will have to put our

house in order to get foreign investment."

In 2011, net foreign inflows in the Indian markets added up to a paltry \$380 million compared to \$29 billion in 2010. That is bad news for a country that has relied heavily on such foreign investment for liquidity.

The European debt crisis and sluggish Western economies were blamed for the drop in outside investors, but domestic factors also played a role.

Last year in India inflation remained high and growth began to plummet following a series of interest rate hikes. The rupee hit a record low against the dollar and has depreciated by nearly 20 percent in the last six months.

Economist Sinha says economic growth will clearly not reach the nine per cent level the government had forecast at the start of 2011. "The last year will see a major slowdown. They expected to curb inflation and improve growth which just did not happen," he explained. "They were trying to reduce demand in an excessive manner."

India is ranked as one of the world's fastest growing economies, but analysts say recent months have shown the global economic slowdown has been taking its toll.

- VOA News

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Opposition Pakistani Politician Draws Huge Karachi Crowd

A crowd said to number more than 100,000 turned out in the southern Pakistani city of Karachi to rally in support of the country's cricket legend, now politician, Imran Khan.

The December 25th demonstration mirrored one that occurred in October in Lahore and also drew at least 100,000 Khan supporters.

Khan is leader of the Movement for Justice Party (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf), which has been joined by several prominent Pakistani politicians, including former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. The former cricket star is also popular with the country's urban middle class.

Khan's rising popularity comes at a time of political unrest in Pakistan over the release of a secret memo that requested U.S. assistance in preventing the country's powerful military from overthrowing the government of President Asif Ali Zardari.

Pakistan's military leaders have rejected the coup plot accusation, which followed last May's U.S. raid that killed



Thousands of supporters of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf or the Movement for Justice Party take part in a rally in Karachi, Pakistan on Sunday, Dec. 25, 2011-pic Via AP-by Shakil Adil

al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden in the military academy town of Abbottabad. They have urged Pakistan's highest court to investigate the source of the memo.

The government, meanwhile, is facing increasing pressure to resign, a move that could lead to elections more than a year earlier than scheduled.

Khan was captain of the national team that in 1992 became the only Pakistani team to capture the cricket World Cup.

Karachi is Pakistan's largest city, capital of the populous Sindh province.

- VOA News

Rouge Valley Health System



Best Buy makes Centenary visits fun for kids

Scarborough Town Centre location donates and installs game units for paediatric patients



A hospital appointment is not often fun for children, but a visit to Rouge Valley Centenary (RVC) won't be boring from now on, thanks to a donation from Best Buy of the Scarborough Town Centre, with new video games, TVs, and more available in the hospital's Galaxy12 Unit and Paediatric department.

In conjunction with the Rouge Valley Health System Foundation, Best Buy staff arranged for the gift and then delivered and installed the equipment, along with DVD players, DVDs, Blackberry Playbooks, and much more electronics. The gift is being used by patients and families of the Paediatric departments of the hospital.

"This is such a generous and meaningful gift for our young patients," says Alexandra Frankel, Child Life Specialist for RVC's Neonatal and Paediatric

Program. "For many children, this puts them at ease during a potentially stressful experience by helping to normalize the hospital environment and provide distraction for some who are going through serious health challenges. This wonderful addition to our unit really makes a world of difference and puts a smile on every child's face!"

On hand for the presentation and tour of the departments, representing Best Buy, were Nikhil Rattan, General Manager, with Geek Squad Agents Colin Maragh, Safi Murtaza and Richard Pinnock.

Nikhil got a chance to test out the gaming equipment with one of the children waiting for an appointment on the 12th Floor. Ryan MacInnis played a little hockey with Nikhil, on a donated PS3.

Fiscal responsibility is good for patient care

Operational Sustainability Plan is about maintaining and improving our ability to invest in patient needs in our hospital

By John Aldis, Vice-President,
Corporate & Post Acute Services
and Chief Financial Officer, RVHS

Our hospital is investing in the current and long-term health care needs of our communities in west Durham and east Toronto.

This of course, is what we should be doing. But it's important to remember that our organization has not always reinvested in direct patient care, replaced equipment or maintained facilities at the level required. So we are still playing catch up.

The fact that we now can, and are, investing in our hospital is the result of clear financial plans supporting our Strategic Plan-On-A-Page, collaboration and teamwork, and a "can do" culture of accountability we have cultivated over the last three to four years.

In that time, Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) has moved from having zero cash on hand and being stalled on investment – for even basic needs such as boilers and roofing – to generating the operating surpluses that we so desperately need to maintain facilities and invest in current and future patient needs.

Fiscal 2011/12 marks the first year of our Operational Sustainability Plan (OSP), the logical evolution of our suc-



cessful Deficit Elimination Plan (DEP), which lived up to its name and was successfully completed in March 2011. The OSP will help guide us through the next three years; building on the platform we built with our DEP. In alignment with our Strategic Plan On-A-Page and our Patient Declaration of Values, the OSP will allow RVHS to increase our regular annual investment in capital needs and fund additional major capital items, including big ticket medical and diagnostic equipment, information systems, and facilities infrastructure.

My Personal Business Commitments are tied to quality improvement

Public blog to staff and physicians

By Rik Ganderton,
President and CEO, RVHS
Focus matters.



All of the improvements we have made for patients at Rouge Valley Health System in recent years are driven by our focus on achieving specific goals. It is our standard work to set annual personal business commitments (PBCs) to define that focus.

My 2011/12 personal business commitments show how we will achieve our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and our three-year Strategic Plan-On-A-Page.

My PBCs set out the direction for all other team members, vice-presidents, directors and everyone throughout the hospital. Think of the PBCs as our high-level work plan for this fiscal year and a set of steps toward achieving our longer-term strategic plan.

Connecting our PBCs to the QIP also aligns us with key provincial government legislation. The QIP stems directly from the province's Excellent Care for All Act. So the QIP offers a roadmap to implementing improvements to our patients' experience.

At Rouge Valley, we have committed to an ambitious set of goals to improve the patient experience. These are aligned with our Strategic Plan-On-A-Page and the four strategic dimensions embedded in it:

Access to Care;
Service Excellence;

Team Engagement; and
Fiscal Responsibility.

Please read the MS Excel spreadsheet of the RVHS Executive 2011–12 Personal Business Commitments for me and the entire senior management team. You'll see how each dimension leads to a set of measurements that we will deliver and track our achievements against. (View the members of senior management team and the roles that they play at our hospital.)

Each commitment is connected to weightings – the relative importance of each item – so the items with the greatest weighting will receive our greatest focus. To view my goals and weightings just click on my tab in the document.

You'll see that we are all committed to measuring our performance against four heavily weighted metrics: the hospital standardized mortality ratio; achieving a top notch emergency department patient length of stay for our admitted patients; meeting our financial targets of generating a surplus so that we can rein-

vest in infrastructure and equipment; and staff satisfaction, to support our team of employees and physicians in improving patient care.

The PBCs hold me, and us, accountable to:

Delivering high quality health care;
Creating a positive patient experience;

Ensuring that we are responsive and accountable to the public; and

Being transparent about it.

These PBCs start the chain of accountability to move us further along on our journey of operational and cultural transformation, which we started in 2007-2008.

We continue to use Lean as our management philosophy and framework for continuous improvement. It is the philosophy and tool kit that enable us to implement the PBCs. It is our expectation that every department and program use our many Lean tools or techniques. These tools and techniques include value stream analysis, process mapping, Kaizen events, standard work, reorganizing the work environment (6S), A3 problem-solving, process control boards, Kamishibai (visual management auditing mechanisms) and more.



Rouge Valley
HEALTH SYSTEM

Rouge Valley Health System

Excellent patient care now & in the New Year

Rouge Valley's Echo magazine keeps community informed on hospital news

By Akilah Dressekie

The hospital's newest magazine informs the community about new regional programs, improved emergency response times, its new three-year operational plan, Rouge Valley Health System's focus on quality care and ongoing investment in patient care.

"My personal business commitments show how we will achieve our Quality Improvement Plan and our three-year Strategic Plan On-A-Page," says Rik Ganderton, president and chief executive officer of Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS), in his blog, which also appears in the Echo magazine.

Other highlights of Echo include:

- * Making specialized health care services in cardiac rehabilitation and thoracic cancer assessment more available to patients;

- * Lowering wait times with a new

patient navigator in both of its emergency departments;

- * New physicians joining Rouge Valley to meet the needs of growing communities in west Durham and east Toronto;

- * Investing in patient care thanks to fiscal responsibility and keeping commitments;

- * A provincial gold award to the hospital for creating a healthy workplace in which staff and physicians can provide excellent health care every day.

Copies of the Echo are available throughout the hospital's two campuses in east Toronto and west Durham, and can be found online on the RVHS Community News page.

www.rougevalley.ca/community-news
<http://0dwww.rougevalley.ca/community-news>

First Baby at Rouge Valley Health Centenary Hospital

First baby born at Rouge Valley Centenary is Mason James, born to Matt and Kate Collingham. He was born at 7:01 a.m. on Jan 1, 2012



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Regional cardiac service, new MRI, redevelopment Patients home sooner, major investments, more services - in Rouge Valley's annual report



Regional cardiac services, huge expansion, new transitional care service, new magnetic resonance imaging scanner, surgical pre-screening, lab accreditation, big investments in equipment and facilities and more are packed into Rouge Valley Health System's annual report.

"Our review of achievements and challenges of the last year demonstrates the improvements in patient care by our Board of Directors, staff, physicians and volunteers. I'm proud to say the annual report proves that our concentrated effort using our Lean approach is making a difference to our patients as more and more of them come to see us for excellent health care," says Rik Ganderton, president and chief executive officer of Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS).

"Our annual report is organized under the four strategic dimensions of our new Strategic Plan On-A-Page: access to care; service excellence; fiscal responsibility; and team engagement," he explains.

Here are a few tangible examples of what the achievements of the last year have meant to patients, thanks to the teamwork of staff and physicians at Rouge Valley's two hospital campuses:

Patients spend less time waiting to be transferred from ambulances, and wait less to get care in emergency departments;

Nurses spend more time caring for patients as a result of having more organized work areas;

Hospital beds are better utilized with less time between patients, meaning people needing care are getting it more quickly;

Improved patient discharge planning,

so that people go home to their families as soon as they are ready;

Less re-admission of patients than in the past;

Virtually no cancelled surgeries now because RVHS screens patients more effectively, making sure they are fit for their procedures. This benefits the patients and the hospital by making the best use of our resources everyday;

And more listed in our new online annual report.

These achievements exemplify the hospital's commitment to its new Patient Declaration of Values, also developed and launched in 2011.

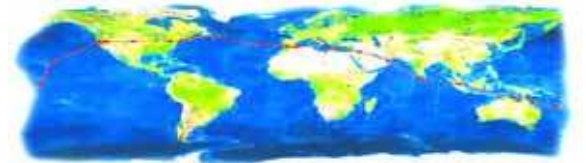
"We've also proven that quality care is directly connected to fiscal responsibility. We closed out our three-year deficit elimination plan in 2011, which put us in a position to make considerable investments that our patients needed," Ganderton says. "We have earned surpluses in each of the last three years, rebuilt our working capital, invested the cash generated by surpluses in new equipment and facility refurbishment to the tune of \$36.1 million in the last three years.

We have also improved the quality of care we have delivered and have grown patient volumes particularly in our emergency departments, where we anticipate seeing almost 120,000 patients this year – a growth of 26 per cent since 2007. We have also increased surgical volumes and decreased surgical wait times."

For more information and to read the hospital's annual report, please visit the website.

www.rougevalley.ca/annual-report-2011

Around the world



The Prophet Is Dead: Juche and the Future of North Korea

by Amarnath Amarasingam

As the North Korean government announces the death of Kim Jong-il, the future of the “hermit kingdom,” along with its 25 million people, remains largely uncertain. It is no secret that life under the Dear Leader was no picnic. Just this month, over 40 human rights organizations, marking the 63rd anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, called for “international action to stop crimes against humanity perpetrated by North Korea’s dictatorship.”

Human Rights Watch marked the occasion of Kim Jong Il’s death with a statement that governments around the world should demand that his successor reform the country’s dismal human rights record. As the rights agency noted, “Kim Jong-Il exercised total control for 17 years over one of the world’s most closed and repressive governments. He was responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, of North Koreans through widespread preventable starvation, horrendous prisons and forced labor camps, and public executions.”

But even while the North Korean regime has been a major concern of governments around the world due to the horrendous treatment of its people as well as its obsessive nuclear ambitions, little has been written about its driving state ideology – the “Juche idea” – and the clues it may hold for predicting the nature of post-Kim Jong Il North Korea.

As Christopher Hale has written, “In its simplest form, Juche is generally defined as North Korea’s ideology of autonomy and self-reliance, and it is meant to replace the principle of *sadaejui* (serving the great) that has character-



Kim Jong-il (born Yuri Irsenovich Kim - 16 February 1941 – 17 December 2011) photo taken on Aug 24, 2011 - pic: Kremlin.ru

ized Korea’s foreign relations throughout much of its history.” As is well known, with the end of the Second World War, Korea was divided along the 38th parallel into the north (administered by the Soviet Union) and the south (administered by the United States). North Korea, or the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), was formally established in 1948.

The 1948 constitution of the DPRK closely resembled other communist countries under the control of the USSR and was patterned on the Soviet Union’s 1936 “Stalinist” constitution. Soviet influence in the DPRK was so strong that the U.S. State Department stated at the time that North Korea was “well advanced toward becoming a Republic of the USSR.” According to Hale, the political philosophy of Juche stemmed from Kim Il Sung’s disillusionment with Soviet domi-

nance as well as his “highly nationalist orientation.”

This nationalist orientation reached full bloom in the 1972 Constitution, which enshrined Juche as the overarching ideology of the state. Article 44 noted that there was a need to “thoroughly establish Juche in scientific research,” and Article 45 expressed the need for “a Juche-oriented, revolutionary literature and art.” Christopher Hale goes so far as to say that “it would be accurate to call the constitution a Juche constitution in light of its saturation with Juche ideology.”

Over the next several decades, the “Juche idea” became more entrenched in the foundation of North Korea. The fall of the USSR in 1991, rather than weakening Kim Il Sung’s commitment to socialism, was a major boost to the Juche idea. According to Kim, the fall of the USSR only signaled the superiority of the North Korean system. As such, in 1992, a new constitution was introduced, one in which references to Marxism-Leninism were replaced by articles reaffirming the superiority of Juche.

However, a more pivotal event would occur two years later that would enshrine Juche as a kind of state religion: the death of Kim Il Sung. As Hale points out, with his death in 1994, Kim Il Sung was relegated to godlike status, “and subsequently he and his purported Juche ideas were regarded with a level of holy sanctity that was not quite possible while he was alive.”

Thus, while Juche was originally used by the elder Kim to emphasize the autonomy of the North Korean state, it has grown into something very different. It was Kim Jong Il’s treatise *On the Juche Idea*, published in 1982, that first

highlighted some of Juche’s religious elements. The treatise raised Kim Jong Il to a kind of prophet, uniquely capable of interpreting and implementing his father’s hopes for the country. After the elder Kim’s death, a new constitution was introduced in 1998, which by all accounts was “a religious eulogy to Kim Il Sung,” referring to him as the “sun of the nation and the lodestar of the reunification of the fatherland.”

As Grace Lee has argued, “Kim Il Sung and his son Kim Jong Il have successfully wielded the Juche idea as a political shibboleth to evoke a fiercely nationalistic drive for North Korean independence and to justify policies of self-reliance and self-denial in the face of famine and economic stagnation in North Korea.”

Now with the passing of both father and son, the future seems uncertain. While some commentators are optimistic that the death of Kim Jong Il signals an end to decades of brutal rule, one wonders if the philosophy of Juche and its religious status in the country will be an impediment to the forging of a drastically new path. As Adrain Buzo rightly argued in *The Guerilla Dynasty: Politics and Leadership in North Korea*, “to depart from this ideology would threaten the DPRK’s very self-definition as a state.”

[Amarnath Amarasingam is a doctoral candidate at Wilfrid Laurier University, and is currently completing his dissertation entitled, Pain, Pride, and Politics: Sri Lankan Tamil Nationalism in Canada. He can be reached at: amarnath0330@gmail.com On Twitter: http://twitter.com/amaramarasingam]

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Health & Fitness

Wish list for 2012



10-9-8-7-6-5-4-3-2-1-Happy New Year! Welcome 2012 and cheers to new beginnings! It's January, the time of year we tend to reflect on the past year and anticipate great change in the following year. We start the year ready to delve into new projects, conquer all that we did not in the previous year and embrace challenges that lie ahead. But, let's face it. Most of us are guilty of repeating the phrase, "I should have saved more money, I could have gone on vacation if I worked less or, I would have been more involved in my child's life if I had more time." According to a Canadian survey, 68% of Canadians are making a resolution for 2012 and 55% of those who made a resolution for 2011 were unsuccessful at achieving it.

To make 2012 a better year than the last, below are the top ten resolutions or the "Wish list for 2012." Make 2012 your year of success!

10. The 3 R's

Reduce, Recycle, Reuse. Be more environmentally friendly by reducing wastes. Try taking your lunch in a plastic container versus a brown paper bag. Reuse plastic bags and recycle articles such as metals, plastics, glass and cardboard. Use your blue recycling bin to separate your recyclables. Become part of the green community!

9. Time for an extreme home makeover.

Declutter, reorganize, recycle, donate, consolidate, and eliminate items in your home. Learn to make your family motto into "a place for everything and everything in its place." Install organizers and shelves in your closet so your belongings are visible, therefore, eliminating the chance of buying doubles of items. Use bookshelves to organize your books, magazines, papers, albums, and other knick-knacks. Go on a shopping spree in your home and donate items that you haven't used that year (if you haven't used it in a year chances are you won't miss it when it's gone!) to charity or good will. Give it to those in need. It's good karma.

8. Save for a rainy day.

When it comes to saving or managing our finances, most of us need all the help we can get. Stay organized by keeping a log of your finances. A simple notebook that includes your expenses and payments can go a long way. Cut up those credit cards! They're dangerous and the cause of much financial distress. To start saving without making a huge financial commitment, set up a pre-authorized automatic withdrawal of \$20 from your bank account into a savings account. \$20 per month results in \$240 of savings for the year. That's \$240 you didn't even expect to save!

7. Foster a positive attitude.

As Francesca Reigler said, "Happiness is an attitude. We either make ourselves miserable, or happy and strong. The amount of work is the same." Most of us agree that a positive mind leads to a positive, fulfilled and happy life. The benefits of a positive attitude

are endless; we have the ability to surmount any obstacle, to achieve great inner strength and power, internal peace and happiness, the ability to empower and inspire others, and the ability to overcome stressful situations. Try to surround yourself with people that share the same positive attitude, it truly is contagious.

6. Make time for yourself.

Some much needed "me" time can be therapeutic, especially after the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. Schedule a spa day, pamper yourself to a hot bath, spend an afternoon watching movies on your couch, or immerse yourself in your favourite book. Just make it about YOU!

5. Start eating more fruits and vegetables.

According to Canada's food guide, a healthy adult between the ages of 19 to 50 should consume 7-8 servings of fruit and vegetables per day. That may be an obscene number for those who believe potato chips count as a serving of vegetables! Yes, it takes effort to cut, peel, slice, chop fruit and vegetables, but like my mother always told me, "an apple a day, keeps the doctor away!" Add fresh or frozen berries to your morning oatmeal, toss an apple in your lunch bag for an afternoon snack, or steam some greens to spruce up your dinner. Make your meals colourful, flavourful and healthy!

4. Get ready, get set, get active!

Put on your running shoes and go for a walk during your lunch break. During the winter months, take advantage of the ice and snow and take the kids ice skating at your local community centre (it's fun and cost effective!). Start with 20 to 30 minutes of activity a day and then slowly aim for 60 minutes. Make it a fun family event!

By Ayktah Grover
Founder, Aura Wellness
Certified Nutrition, Fitness, Pre and Post Natal Specialist

3. Pursue a hobby.

Monday to Friday we sing the same mantra: we wake up, go to work, come home, sleep, wake up and go to work again. Life can get very boring and monotonous if you don't pursue your interests and passions. Challenge your mind, body and spirit by attempting activities that are intellectually, emotionally, mentally, physically or psychologically stimulating. For example, attempt a crossword puzzle, tease your brain with Sudoku, take a knitting or crochet class, learn a language, join a hockey league, volunteer at your church or community centre, get involved in social groups and organizations, explore your artistic side through painting, music or design, or spend time writing the first few pages of the novel you strive to publish one day.

2. Get your hands dirty in the kitchen!

Cooking can be an intimidating task, especially if you don't know where to begin. You may be the undomesticated type that has never stepped into a kitchen, let alone prepared a meal. The good news is that there is hope for you! Where there's a will, there's a way! You don't have to be Martha Stewart or Rachel Ray to be the master in the

kitchen. To start, attempt a simple recipe, for example a grilled cheese sandwich. Three ingredients –whole wheat bread, low fat cheese, a touch of butter and five minutes of your time and voila you have a quick, healthy meal!

1. Lose weight and get healthy.

Drum roll please. The number one resolution amongst Canadians is to lose weight. Surprised? Not so much. No matter what the weight loss goal - 5, 10 or 15 pounds, we all want to shed that excess fat and achieve a toned, fit, healthy, happy body. Unfortunately, most of us get discouraged after the first few weeks simply because life gets too busy to make time for exercise and healthy eating. To avoid falling off the bandwagon, try setting short term, realistic goals such as losing five pounds in one month. Keep a food and exercise journal to track your progress. Make small, simple changes to your lifestyle such as preparing more meals at home and making fewer trips through drive-thru. Remember, it's your body- fuel it, use it and love it!

2012 is the year for success! Don't wait another year to run that marathon, try a new recipe or contact that long, lost friend. Make it happen now! What are you waiting for?

Ayktah Grover
BSc, BAA, PTS and NWS

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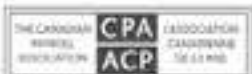
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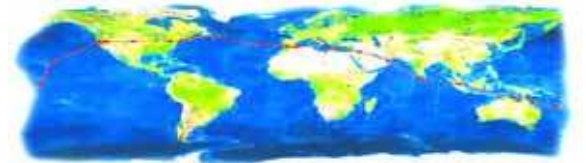
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2. Who controls the policy?	2. The bank controls all the options.	2. Insured has control of all the options.
3. Can I guarantee I will always be covered?	3. Your policy will lapse if your mortgage goes into arrears.	3. Policy will not lapse if you miss a Mortgage payment.
4. Who is my beneficiary?	4. Your Beneficiary is the Bank.	4. You can name any Beneficiary you want.
5. What kind of coverage do I have?	5. Your coverage is decreasing term with level cost.	5. Level term coverage with fixed premiums.
6. Can I be covered if I change mortgage holders?	6. Moving the mortgage means reapplying for insurance.	6. Your covered regardless of which institution you choose.
7. How much insurance do I have?	7. Face amount of the policy cannot exceed the value of the outstanding mortgage.	7. Your coverage is determined by your needs and wants.
8. What options do I have if I or my spouse dies?	8. No option but to pay off the mortgage.	8. Survivor can invest the money and use returns to pay the mortgage and still keep the capital.
9. Can I convert my insurance to a permanent plan at any time?	9. Not extendible.	9. Your policy is renewable and convertible.
10. Am I penalized for casual deposits?	10. Penalizes casual deposits.	10. Rewards casual deposits.
11. Who guarantees that I am covered if I die?	11. Underwriting is done at time of death and research can date back to birth.	11. Underwriting is done at time of application and before a second premium is paid.
12. Who is more expensive?	12. Can be very expensive.	12. We are very competitive.

Around the world



Sri Lanka IT industry faces skilled staff, office space shortages

Sri Lanka's fast-growing information communications technology (ICT) industry faces difficulties in hiring skilled staff, finding good office space and accessing fast Internet links, a survey has found, a news report by the island nation's premier business web portal lankabusinessonline.com says.

Lanka Business online report as follows:

Although the IT export industry will continue to grow fast, the industry is confronted with various concerns that could become a hindrance to its future progress, according to a new survey by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

A key concern is inability to access "quality" office space with parking facilities at a reasonable cost, said the survey commissioned by the Export Development Board which wants to make IT a top export sector.

"Lack of skilled staff, particularly with high-end technical skills and English language skills remains critical," it said.

ICT and BPO (business process outsourcing) companies still faced high costs associated with communication as well



as poor service quality of high-speed Internet facilities, the report said.

The sector also faced threats from rival IT export nations.

"Access to markets remains a significant concern with the client base opting for cheaper markets followed by lack of opportunities for small companies," the report said.

"Poor country visibility as an IT destination, absence of up-to-date technology, and time consuming procedures to obtain services from institution such as the department of Inland Revenue and Sri Lanka Customs further act as barriers to the industry," it said.

"In addition, global competition from IT giants such as India as well as emerging market such as Eastern Europe and South America remain a hindrance to the future growth of the industry."

Sri Lanka Govt rules out TNA demand for police powers

Sri Lanka government has turned down the demand of Sri Lanka's main Tamil party Tamil national Alliance (TNA) for police powers to provincial governments, amid decentralisation talks in a bid to find a political settlement to the grievances of the minority ethnic community. "Police powers cannot be given and will not be given."

There are reasons why they cannot be given," Cabinet spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella told reporters here. The government firmly refused to accept the demand of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) for police powers to provincial councils. Rambukwella said Sri Lanka had learnt from the Indian experience on the downside of conferring police powers to provincial governments. "Madam Sonia Gandhi had to seek permission to travel. A former chief minister was

assaulted and dragged along the ground by his own police force. These type of things cannot be allowed," he stressed.

Police and land powers to provinces figure high on TNA's direct talks with the government which are having a rough ride presently. In addition, the TNA seeks a re-merger of the north and east provinces. The government is averse to such contentious demands from the main Tamil party. According to the thirteenth amendment to the Sri Lankan constitution adopted in 1987, the police and land powers are subjects to be devolved to all nine provincial councils in the country. The TNA and government started talks in January, with President Mahinda Rajapaksa opting to appoint a high-powered ministerial committee to discuss the grievances of the Tamil community in Lanka. - PTI

'Sri Lanka's economy continues to perform well'

Central Bank of Sri Lanka Governor, Ajith Nivard Cabraal, has claimed that the country's economy continues to perform well and is among high growth nations such as India and China, discounting a ratings agency's assessment of its financial system as 'high risk'.

Mr Cabraal was responding to Fitch Ratings' listing of Sri Lankan economy among a group of high risk financial systems in Asia and the Pacific.

"We can't agree with the statement when they have rated India and China among high risk economies alongside Sri Lanka. But these three countries have managed to record high economic

growth," he said.

He said all three nations have recorded improved unemployment rates compared to most other nations which are currently going through a patch of negative economic growth and high unemployment figures between 15 to 20 per cent.

Sri Lanka seeks to maintain an 8 per cent growth rate in the post-ethnic conflict phase, with increased revenue from tourism and foreign direct investment.

Tourist arrivals grew over 30 per cent year-on-year during the first nine months of 2011 and FDI has reached a billion US dollars, as declared in the Budget 2012 presented recently. - PTI

Sri Lanka vows to bring to justice killer of British tourist

Authorities in Sri Lanka has vowed to bring to justice the killer of a British tourist who was gunned down in the country's southern resort town of Tangalle on Christmas eve.

"We will proceed with the investigation without any bias."

The law will be fully implemented," Nalaka Godahewa, a top tourism official said.

The 32-year-old British tourist, an International Red Cross (ICRC) worker, was gunned down in Tangalle. He was said to have intervened to settle a brawl involving the locals. The government has also offered to fly in the family members of the Russian woman involved in the attack.

"We are taking care of her medical bills and we are also offering to bring

down any of her family members to be with her until she is able to travel back home," he said.

The main suspect is the ruling party Chairman of the local council there. He and five others have been already remanded.

Local tourist industry operators have said that the incident has sparked fears among foreign tourists.

However, Godahewa said this was an isolated incident which will have no adverse impact on the tourism prospects.

Sri Lanka has laid emphasis on tourism to boost growth in the country following the end of the ethnic conflict in May 2009.

Tourist arrivals have increased to over 800,000 this year from 650,000 in 2010. - PTI/Wire

Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall to Undertake a Royal Tour of Canada in 2012

Media release by Governor General of Canada

OTTAWA—His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, is pleased to announce that a Royal Tour of Canada will take place next year, during the Diamond Jubilee year of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's accession to the Throne.

Their Royal Highnesses The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall have accepted the invitation of the Government of Canada to undertake a Royal Tour in May 2012. As part of Canada's celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee, the Royal Tour by Their Royal Highnesses will include stops in New Brunswick,



Ontario and Saskatchewan.

A detailed itinerary will be published at a later date by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

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Milestones



Anjali Appadurai : Student from B.C. in climate change spotlight after passionate speech

Report appearing here courtesy of the Vancouver Sun by Evan Duggan, features spotlight on BC student after rousing speech in South Africa:

A young scholar from B.C. has found herself in the centre of the international climate change spotlight after a video of her rousing speech at the Durban climate talks in South Africa recently went viral.

Anjali Appadurai, a former student of Gleneagle Secondary in Coquitlam, who is now a third-year student at College of the Atlantic (COA) in Maine, stepped up to the microphone and challenged the delegates to put aside what she called short-sighted ambitions in order to set long-term goals to fight climate change.

"You've been negotiating all my life," said a clear and confident Appadurai in her speech, which is garnering tens of

thousands of views on YouTube and is winning praise from the likes of Naomi Klein, The New York Times and Amy Goodman of Democracy Now!, which aired the speech. "In that time, you've failed to meet pledges, you've missed targets and you've broken promises," Appadurai continued. "I speak for more than half the world's population," she said, referring to the youth of the world. "What does it take to get a stake in this game? Lobbyists? Corporate influence? Money?"

The student of development economics and global politics asked the international dignitaries why they've failed to set hard targets to combat climate change. "Where is the courage in this room?" she asked. "These will be seen as the defining moments of an era in which narrow self-interest prevailed over science, reason,

and common compassion."

As she finished her speech, Appadurai stepped to the side of the stage and looked across the room to her fellow student delegates. "Get it done," she called to the audience, in a fashion similar to that of the global Occupy movement. "Get it done," the youths called back, several times.

Andrew Revkin of the New York Times called the speech "remarkable," while author Naomi Klein called Appadurai "a hero" on Twitter.

Appadurai is one of nine delegates from COA who attended the meetings in Durban, South Africa. The young scholars took part in a tutorial on climate change politics and policy with Doreen Stabinsky, a faculty member at COA in international relations, who also attended the meetings.

The students studied the science, poli-



Anjali Appadurai

tics, and treaties surrounding climate change, which enabled the youths to attend the meetings known as Conferences of Parties.

New police inspector says he will lead by example

The first time Nishan Duraipappah laid eyes on Milton, it was as a six-year-old Sri Lankan immigrant.

An only child, Duraipappah arrived in this country when just a year old and after a brief time in Toronto, moved to one of Milton's first new subdivisions.

Today, 31 years later, as Duraipappah surveys the much-altered and densely populated Milton landscape, it's as inspector, 1 District (Milton and Halton Hills) of the Halton Regional Police Service.

Duraipappah may be new to the job, but not to the community. His multi-faceted and accomplished career began as a uniform police officer patrolling the streets of Milton, Halton Hills and Burlington. He served the police services in a multitude of capacities throughout the region, but remained broadly ensconced in this community as family man, coach, musician and teammate.

In a relatively short period of time, he has shot through the ranks and distinguished himself in criminal investigations, and as an investigator in the drugs and morality unit where he worked for four years. He was seconded to the RCMP for a brief period of time and then promoted to sergeant as diversity and cultural coordinator working out of headquarters and for the police chief.

In this position, Duraipappah was responsible for the co-ordination of all cultural relations forged by the police service and represented the chief of police and the service as primary contact. He also co-ordinated all internal diversity and cultural training for police so that "they understood the changing community which we were policing."

A reciprocal component of this job was also allowing newcomers an opportunity to learn of policing here in Canada through outreach, he says.

Rather than this position being

launched in response to a need, it served as a proactive approach to accommodate the increasingly diverse and fast growing communities within Halton, he says.

It was designed to accommodate not just the region's cultural diversity, but other segments of the population such as the deaf community, those with disabilities and multi-faith communities.

"We as an organization need to be connected. Everybody here within the region deserves the same equitable policing services. For us not to be progressive, to not be understanding of the needs of every citizen, is for the police service not to live up to its core function," he says.

Having worked with many other police organizations across the province, he has always been proud of how advanced Halton police are in their cultivation of working partnerships with community leaders, so that when issues arise, contacts are a mere phone call away.

After serving as a patrol sergeant and detective in Burlington, Duraipappah was promoted to staff sergeant as executive officer to the deputy chief of operations, then assigned as manager of drugs and morality, guns and gangs and firearms units, which led to his current promotion.

Duraipappah says he's fortunate to have been given the opportunities in policing he has, and happy to have contributed in each of them.

Halton is one of the safest communities nationally and has the benefit of being ahead of the curve, says Duraipappah. Without the demands imposed on police in large urban centres, Halton can take the lead with innovative new projects. One of those programs initiated in the 1980's led to Duraipappah's career choice.

In his last year at Milton District High School, a 17-year-old Duraipappah participated in the Police Ethnic and Cultural Education (PEACE) Program, a summer



Nishan Duraipappah was recently promoted to inspector for One District (Milton and Halton Hills) of the Halton Regional Police Service.

placement initiative designed to attract a diverse group of students and expose them to a broad range of policing functions.

"I met a few people who really extended themselves to me and made the experience pivotal to me," he says.

So profound was the experience that he maintained those relationships throughout his post-secondary education at University of Toronto where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology and Sociology. He then went on to the Ontario Police College and was deployed in his hometown. In terms of policing over the years, Duraipappah says community needs haven't changed, however, the way police respond to those needs has. People still desire safe, quiet communities, free of disorder, whether they're in older core areas or sprawling new developments, he says.

There are contemporary slants to issues involving youth and fraud, for example, which drive how police respond, he says.

"As an organization, policing has

become more sensitive to the changing needs of the community. For example, we have increased focus on assisting victims, youth and investigations pertaining to elderly, as well as technological crimes," says Duraipappah.

"Officers have become more technologically advanced. As an organization we continue to grow. Our mechanisms get better."

The current face of the police force is young and diverse, itself a reflection of the community it represents, he says. He feels his time immersed in a broad spectrum of policing gives him a firm foundation for his new post.

At 37, he's also not that far-removed from his patrol days and he has a young family — three children under 6 — so he understands the demands of job and family.

He's excited and optimistic about his new role and fiercely proud of his officers.

"This is my community too. I still coach soccer in Milton. My closest friends are still here. I never left Milton. All my roots, my connections are here," he says.

To return to the community where it all began, "is not part of my doing, but of my fortune," he adds.

"I want the people of Milton to know they absolutely have some of the best police, and I want to ensure it stays that way, that the changing needs of this community are met.

"Internally, my role is to make sure I look after my people, that they are equipped and led in a way that allows them to achieve the very best as police officers for this municipality."

Duraipappah says he will lead by example; he plans to be out in front with his officers and their supervisors so that Miltonians "see us all as one team providing police services for this community."

Courtesy: www.insidehalton.com



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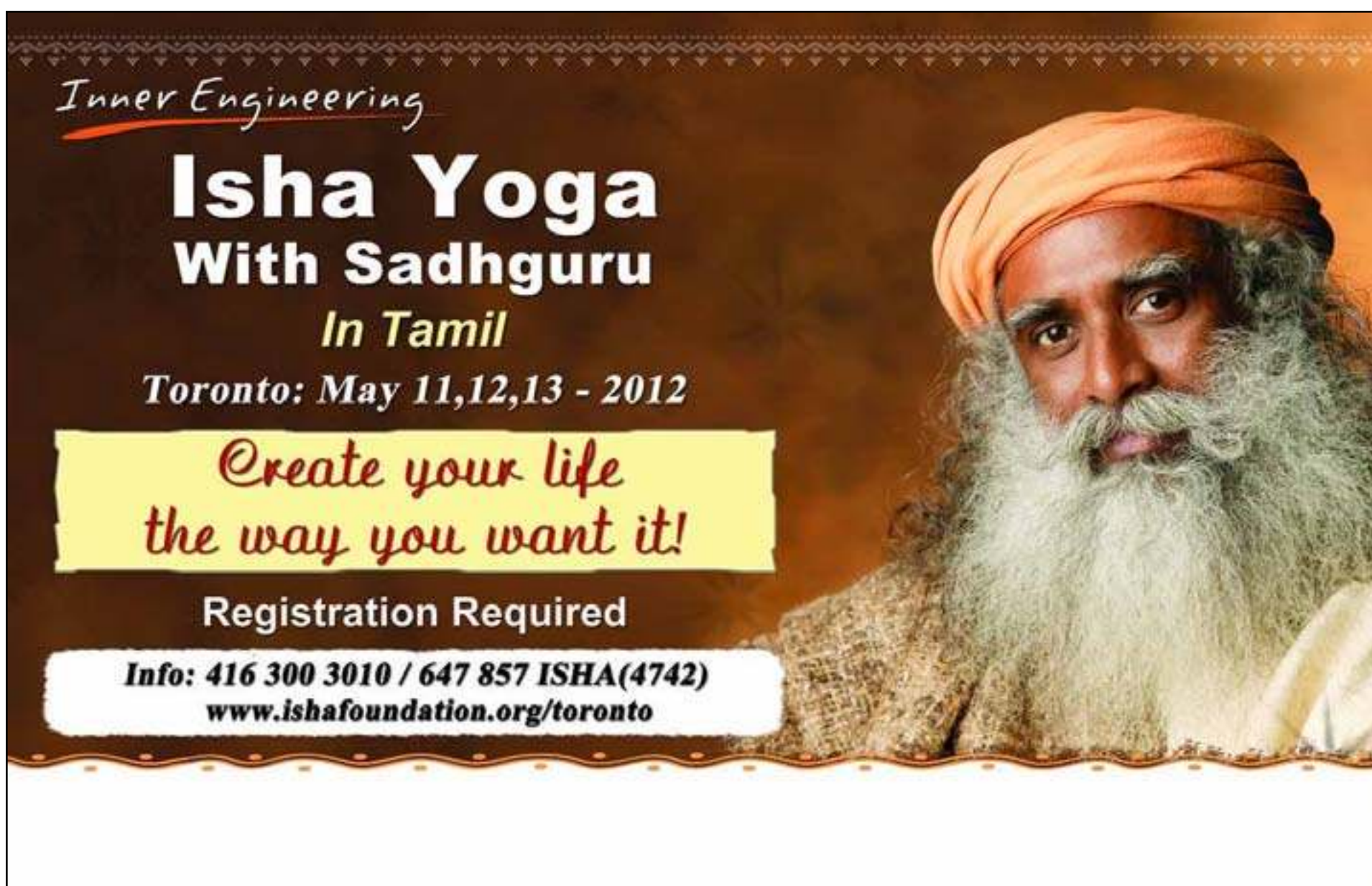












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Grand Opening of New Head Office by Serandib Travel 1

On the eve of December 06th 2011 Serandib Travel 1 proudly inaugurated their new operational Head office at # 207-7 East-Vale Drive, Markham. The staff and President of Serandib Travel 1, Thirukesan Mahesan thanked all of their customers and media partners for the continues support.

Established in Canada in 2004, by Thirukesan Mahesan, President of Serandib Travel, with in 7 years Serandib have elevated their services to Canada, India, USA and Sri Lanka. Serandib Travel 1 offers air line

tickets, tour packages in Canada and around the world.

Among the invitees Keith Dalgado, Sales Manager – Air Canada, Leyland Sampayo, Country Manager - Emirates Airlines, Lalith Wickremasinghe, Country Manager – the SriLankan Airlines, Clifford Tellis, Canada Sales Manager - Kuwait Airways and Merwyn Fernandes, National Sales Manager - Gulf Airlines.

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Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here.



Standard Mortgages Inc Celebrates 10th Anniversary in Toronto

By Dharsan Sri

Raj Subrayam celebrated the 10th anniversary of the opening of his company, Standard Mortgages Inc. with the attendance of his staff, friends, and family on Friday, Dec 9th at J&J Swagat Hall. It was a great gala that left the night unforgettable!

Throughout the night, amazing music provided by Mega Tuners, leaving the dance floor packed and rocking. The night started off with a few words by Raj, giving out his greetings and thanking everyone for attending. A musical gala followed u with singles, duet performances and later on a special performance by Visshna, Raj's youngest daughter.

Attendees were entertained by belly dancers as well.

After a sumptuous meal, the dance floor was re-opened for the remaining

hours with more variety of music playing. The night ended off with hugs and good-byes and everyone wishing Raj for the best and success throughout the years to come!

Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here.





The Scarborough Hospital

Fatigue and Safety Culture

A two-pronged initiative that tackles both quality of worklife and quality of patient care is geared to empowering nurses at The Scarborough Hospital while assisting them in recognizing signs of fatigue.

The Nursing Practice Committee (NPC) has launched the two-part project this month which involves all nursing categories among TSH's 1,300 nursing staff: RNs, RPNs, Advanced Practice Nurses, Clinical Resource Leaders, managers and directors.

"The two areas we are working on are based on studies, projects and research that's already out there, namely, nurse fatigue and empowering nurses to lead the safety culture of their units," explains Rhonda Seidman-Carlson, Vice-President, Interprofessional Practice and Chief Nursing Executive. "While other hospitals are embarking on similar projects, I think what sets TSH apart from most is that the concept for the initiative came from the nursing staff, not from management."

The NPC split into two working groups: one to identify, plan and implement 'safety huddles' on the nursing units; and the other to address nurse fatigue.

Sarah Aiken, a Charge Nurse with Mental Health, leads the safety huddles while Tanja Futter, RN with the Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Care Centre, leads the project on nurse fatigue.

"These safety huddles are patient-focused, but also interdisciplinary focused, and are aimed at identifying primary patient outcomes," Sarah explains. "It results in a more unified, streamlined process for clearer communication and effective early discharge."

"The nurses are thrilled with how effective it is, and how empowering it is for nurses to take the lead in patient safety."

There is considerable data available about nurse fatigue and the affect on patient safety. The Canadian Nurses Association's report on 'Nurse Fatigue and Patient Safety' offers numerous recommendations, specifically at the individual level. "We are developing a tool – a self-assessment questionnaire – where our nurses can identify fatigue before it starts and look at ways to care for themselves before it becomes unmanageable," Tanja explains. "This is a tool that they can use as a resource for many years."



Sarah Aiken, lead on the patient safety part of the project (left); Tanja Futter, lead on the nursing fatigue initiative (right); and Ade Oyemade, Manager of Interprofessional Education at TSH (centre). Photo by William Meijer

Nurses can easily identify when they're getting tired, Tanja adds, "but maybe not realize just how tired they are and may not recognize the early signs of fatigue."

"Working in a field with trauma victims, I know that if I couldn't identify when I was getting fatigued and care for myself before it led to burn-out, I wouldn't still be in this field," she says, "even though I love what I do and it's something I want to do for the rest of my career."

Ade Oyemade is the Manager of Interprofessional Education at TSH and the chair of the NPC. She says frontline nurses are excited about the initiatives.

"For example, fatigue is not just an individual thing; it's systemic. We want to improve and enhance safety and help nurses understand fatigue," Ade explains. "What organization support can we put in place to help nurses reduce fatigue? Our focus is to ensure nurses 'own' the initiatives and are engaged in it."

The project is being funded through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Nursing Secretariat in support of initiatives that enhance quality of worklife and quality patient care.

40-year career fuelled by public transit

Public transit may have played a key role in Judith Britton's outstanding 40-year career at The Scarborough Hospital.

When the Registered Nurse was fresh out of nursing school and looking for her first job in 1971, Scarborough General Hospital (as it was then known) and Centenary

conceived, planned, financed and oversaw the construction of Scarborough General Hospital) were still here and every unit had a 'floor Sister' available if you needed to talk," she recounts.

Having spent her entire career on a Medicine unit in the hospital, Judith is especially excited by the hospitalist physician model that has been implemented on CP4 where she currently works.

"Having the same doctor here each day has been a real improvement in terms of the continuity of care for the patients," she said.

From a personal career perspective, Judith is most proud of the Critical Care certificate she completed in her early 50s.

"I really enjoyed being able to keep up with the younger students," she jokes.

Registered Nurse Judith Britton retired on December 22 after a 40-year career on the hospital's Medicine units.



Hospital at Neilson Road and Ellesmere Avenue were the two closest hospitals from her home in Scarborough.

"However, back in those days, my husband and I didn't have a car and Centenary wasn't easily accessible by public transit and Scarborough General was, so I applied here," she explains.

Fast forward to 2011 and Judith is now the mother of two daughters in their 30s, about to be a grandmother for the third time, and has been happily settled in Pickering for the last 28 years.

In November, Judith received her 40-year recognition award.

When asked to reflect on how the hospital has changed throughout her career, Judith cites the "different spiritual feel" of the organization when she arrived.

"In 1971, the Sisters (of Misericorde who originally

For Ann Sideris, CP4's Clinical Resource Leader, Judith's decades of experience have allowed her to become "an excellent mentor and role model for all staff."

"Judith's calm influence and professionalism have made her a strong leader on CP4 and well respected by her colleagues," Ann adds.

Judith, who retired on December 22, admits that the prospect of ending her career had brought about a mix of emotions.

"At first, I was really excited about it, but then I also realized how much I'm going to miss the people and the patients here."

In addition to spending time with her grandkids and catching up on her reading, this life-long learner's retirement plans include some training to "learn how to use our home computer to its full capacity."

Keeping your New Year's fitness goals

For many people, the New Year is an opportunity for fresh starts and setting new goals. Improving fitness levels continues to be one of the most popular resolutions, yet it's also one of the most difficult for a majority of individuals to maintain.

"Research indicates that more than two-thirds of people who set fitness goals at the beginning of the year give up within two months," says Lori Irvine, Organization and Employee Development Coordinator at The Scarborough Hospital. "However, by following some key steps, you can dramatically improve your odds of sticking to your goals."

Lori offers the following tips when setting a New Year's fitness plan:

- **Set realistic fitness goals – Ensure you speak with your physician before beginning any fitness regimen and make an appointment with a personal trainer who can help you break your overall goals into smaller, reachable targets.**
- **Write down your fitness goals – Simply writing down your short-term and long-term goals and the steps involved in meeting them can increase your motivation and reduce the chance of giving up.**
- **Tell your family and friends – Verbalizing your fitness plan and letting others know about it can help you feel more accountable to your goals.**
- **Prioritize and schedule regular exercise – You'll be more likely to stick to your fitness routine if it's scheduled into your calendar like any other commitment.**
- **Choose a gym or fitness routine that is close to your home or accessible during your commute to and from work – A convenient location means you'll be less likely to skip your fitness routine due to factors such as bad weather, traffic, etc.**
- **Don't try to be perfect! – Whether it's missing a couple of workouts or giving in to a treat, don't beat yourself up over the occasional slip.**
- **Reward yourself – Whenever you achieve or complete a part of your fitness plan, reward yourself! Buy something you've wanted for a while, go for a spa treatment...Do whatever makes you feel good about all your hard work – you deserve it!**



The Scarborough Hospital

The Scarborough Hospital wants to know: What's your favourite comfort food when you're sick?

Whether it's a simple bowl of chicken noodle soup or something more unusual, the foods we eat when we're sick are as important as a warm blanket and fuzzy slippers. And now your favourite comfort food story could win you one of three great prizes in The Scarborough Hospital's comfort food story contest.

The Scarborough Hospital is looking for unique, funny, inspiring, poignant, or remarkable stories about what people eat when they're not feeling well and why. The best entry as chosen by staff in the General campus Nutrition and Food Services department will win a \$200 Oliver & Bonacini gift card that can be used at the Canadian comfort food restaurant Bannock in downtown Toronto. Second prize includes two gift baskets of food straight from local Ontario farmers, courtesy of the organizations 100 Mile Market and 100km Foods. Third prize is a gift basket from The Scarborough Hospital's prime food vendor SYSCO Canada.

"We're adding many traditional comfort foods to our inpatient menu as part of our

ReFRESHing our Menu project in order to cater to the dietary preferences of our diverse community, and to help

make our patients' hospital stay just that much better," said Vice President of Patient Experience Anne Marie Males.

"But with cold and flu season in full swing, many people will be looking to their own personal comfort foods, and we want to give them an opportunity to share their story and maybe win a prize!"

Visit www.tsh.to for contest details. The contest is open until January 20, 2012.

Madeleine Salcedo (left) and Lilibeth Bautista from The Scarborough Hospital's General campus Nutrition and Food Services department sample some of the new recipes being developed for the patient menu. The Scarborough Hospital is adding many traditional comfort foods to its patient menu as part of their ReFRESHing our Menu project.



Chilean Surgeons travelled to watch TSH Surgeon's new technique in Orthopedic Surgery

It is a very rare procedure – only three surgeons in Canada are doing it – and Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Jim Rathbun of The Scarborough Hospital is considered a world leader. It's the Oxford domed lateral partial knee operative technique, and five surgeons travelled all the way from Chile last month to observe Dr. Rathbun perform this relatively new procedure.

"Lots of people are doing medial Oxfords, but domed lateral Oxfords are very rare. I'm the only one in Toronto doing it," explains Dr. Rathbun, who has been with TSH since 1973. "I completed 245 domed laterals since 2005, so I have a lot of experience, and the Chilean surgeons are anxious to do it in Chile, where they've had quite a bit of experience with medial Oxford."

The difference between lateral and medial has to do with the side of the knee. The medial refers to the side between the legs, while the lateral is the opposite – the outside of the legs. People needing the domed lateral procedure are what Dr. Rathbun calls 'knock-kneed,' the opposite of the more common 'bow-legged.'

"Patients that are worn out on the lateral side of their knee face a more complicated procedure. That's why few surgeons are performing it and that's why many of my colleagues refer their patients to me," Dr. Rathbun adds.



Between cases, Dr. Jim Rathbun (centre seated in white) poses with (left to right): Jose Pablo Martelli; Dr. Jamie Duboy; Dr. Maurice Wainer; Dr. Rafael Vega; and Sandy Murray. Photo by William Meijer.

For the five Chilean surgeons, the demonstration was an opportunity to observe this rare procedure from a leading expert.

"We heard about Dr. Rathbun's work through Biomet (manufacturer of Oxford knee replacement components) because he's one of the most important surgeons working with the newer devices, especially the domed lateral," explains Dr. Jaime Duboy, from the Department of Orthopedics at the Clinica Las Condes in Santiago, Chile. "We're particularly interested in the domed lateral because it's a new design. Very few surgeons around the world have this kind of experience. We are familiar with the older designs; that's why the new

design is so attractive to us."

Dr. Duboy and his Chilean colleagues are eager to use the techniques they learned both observing Dr. Rathbun and hands-on surgery with cadavers as part of their instruction while in Toronto.

"Dr. Rathbun is a wonderful surgeon, and he selected good cases that were well-indicated for us," Dr. Duboy adds. "We learned a lot, and will bring this home because we have the same kind of patients with the same kind of problems. The domed lateral is a good alternative to a more expensive total knee replacement, which is a far more complicated operation."

The manufacturer of the domed lateral Oxford knee



Five Chilean surgeons visited The Scarborough Hospital to observe Orthopedic Surgeon Dr. Jim Rathbun use an Oxford domed lateral partial knee surgical technique. Photo by William Meijer.

The Scarborough Hospital's HSMR goes from worst to first in Toronto

When The Scarborough Hospital's Hospital Standardized Mortality Ratio (HSMR) results made front page news in The Toronto Star four years ago, it was because TSH was reported as having the worst rate in the city. While it turned out TSH wasn't quite the worst, it was clear that a great deal of work needed to be done to improve those numbers.

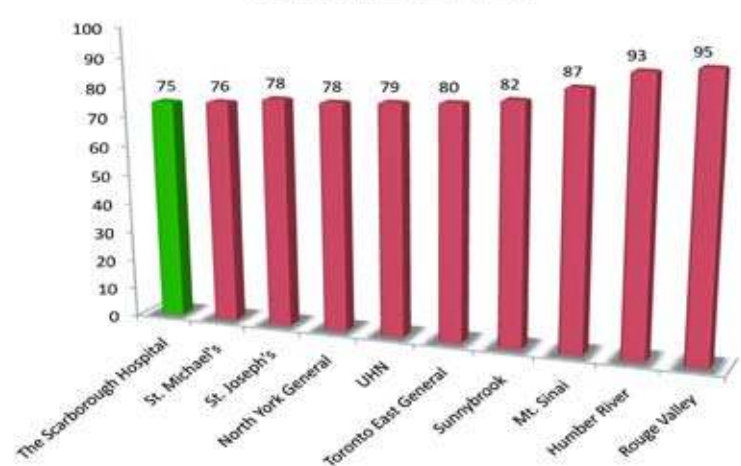
Each year since then, TSH has made strides toward that goal. In 2010, TSH's score of 84 gave it one of the best HSMR in the city. Yet, still, the hospital continued to improve its overall quality of care and data accuracy.

Last month, TSH publicly reported its corporate 2010-11 HSMR result of 75, making TSH the top hospital performer in Toronto.

"This is a fantastic result for our hospital, and reflects the hard work of our staff and physicians who have made improving HSMR a focus over the past several years," says Dr. John Wright, President and CEO. "The work they have done truly exemplifies our values of accountability and excellence, and we should be truly proud of the success we have had."

TSH patients, too, should be proud of these results, knowing The Scarborough Hospital continues to make patient safety and quality of care a top priority. "This HSMR report clearly demonstrates that we are committed to patient-centred care, and that our efforts are on track to making this organization one of the best hospitals in the city, and indeed, in the entire country," says Dr. Wright.

HSMR 2010-11





The Scarborough Hospital

Marla Fryer

New Executive Vice President, Clinical Operations

You could say nursing is “in her blood.” Marla Fryers, The Scarborough Hospital’s new Executive Vice President, Clinical Operations, comes from a long line of nurses.

“My great grandmother delivered babies. My mother was a nurse, and both of my sisters are nurses,” Marla says. “It’s a calling.”

Marla’s father was in the air force, and the family lived in many places in Canada and Europe during her life. They landed long enough in Alberta to allow Marla to complete her high school and most of her post-secondary education there. She came to the University of Toronto for her graduate work, and hasn’t looked back.

While she has been in management positions for the past 25 years of her 35-year nursing career, Marla never allows herself to stray too far from the patient.

“I always connect with the patient, whether it is hands-on care delivery or working with teams of people. The centre of all the work I do is focused on improving the patient experience,” she explains. “I try to find ways that I can have the most impact. When you’re delivering hands-on care, you can affect those patients who are assigned to you, but as you move to management, there’s a broader scope. You can communicate your vision of what you think the patient experience should be, and you can assemble a team of people who are each committed to the same goal.

“So I would say that I never feel very far from the patient. Part of how I operate is to be quite visible, to be on the units.”

It has been a long and winding road that led Marla to TSH, and to the newly created position of Executive Vice President, Clinical Operations.

“My responsibility includes all clinical programs and

diagnostic imaging,” she explains. “I feel accountable for any patient who walks into our buildings, to ensure they have a positive clinical experience.”

Arriving to TSH September 19, Marla says she loves it here.

“I have had such a warm welcome from everybody that I’ve connected with: my peers, people who report to me, frontline staff,” she adds. “I’ve introduced a number of changes, and everyone has been very open-minded and willing to try something new. What I see is excellent quality of care, a real willingness to look at how we can do better. What I see at TSH is this energy, and it comes from a strong strategic planning process and a strong clinical action planning process where people felt their voices were heard, and they became engaged in what we’re trying to achieve here.”

Marla’s energy will be focused on improving the patient experience, but she also believes in a healthy workplace and balanced work-life.

“My intention will be to decrease the duplication and waste that frustrates people on the units,” Marla says. “The bottom line is our goal is the same: we’re all committed to making the patient experience better, and we have a ways to go here. I’m confident we can make some real gains in a short period of time.”



Married with a grown daughter, Marla is an avid golfer. She and her husband hope to resume skiing this winter, and they both are involved in their community, organizing events, golf tournaments, curling bonspiels and social dinners.

“Family is very important to me. My daughter is finishing up at University of Guelph, and I have two schnauzers who keep me busy walking outdoors.”

Thanks for sticking it to the flu, TSH!

Earlier last year, we were thrilled to announce our flu vaccination compliance statistics from 2010, which vaulted The Scarborough Hospital into second place among GTA hospitals. Imagine how excited we are now to have exceeded those numbers by 16 per cent at the General campus and by an incredible 34 per cent at the Birchmount campus.

“It truly is a remarkable improvement,” says Mary Anne Adam, Director of Occupational Health. “Our goal was to exceed 2010’s results by 10 per cent, and we worked very hard to achieve that increase. But to reach these numbers—52 per cent at the General and 62 per cent at the Birchmount—shows we are starting to make a cultural change at TSH.”

Adam says the Stick It To The Flu campaign built on the strengths of 2010’s work, and incorporated some of the lessons learned.

“From past experience, we learned to focus on the barriers individuals might have to getting the flu shot,” she says, pointing to previous complaints about a lack of time to get the shot, a belief the vaccine was ineffective, and past bad experiences. “So we made it easier than ever for individuals to get vaccinated by taking roving flu carts to the units at different times of the day, including nights and weekends. We teamed up with Toronto Public Health and Infection Control to help provide education to staff. And we worked with Corporate Communications to make this year’s campaign even more visible, and to promote the vaccinations.”

Adam says the 2011 numbers only reflect compliance up to November 15, the deadline for reporting to Toronto Public Health. But staff and physicians continue to get vaccinated, and she says our final numbers for the year will be even higher.



The Scarborough Hospital

TSH Welcomes Toronto's first baby of 2012!

Our General campus Family Maternity Centre was abuzz with excitement on New Year's Day as we welcomed Toronto's first baby of 2012 into the world at just 40 seconds after midnight.

Weighing in at six pounds 14 ounces, the proud parents named their new baby boy Ming Shui, a name which signifies good fortune in Chinese.

"Ming means bright. We hope our son will have a bright future ahead of him," said father Yichuan Lei. "And Shui represents water."

Ming Shui is the third child for Yichuan and his wife Li Zhang. They also have six-year-old son and a five-year-old daughter.

The arrival of Ming Shui was also pleasant surprise for staff working the New Year's Eve shift. "We thought we might have another mother who would deliver close to midnight, but not Li," said Unit Clerk Cassandra D'Astou. "However, at about a minute after midnight, the nurse announced we have a New Year's baby! Everyone was so happy!"



Staff at The Scarborough Hospital's General campus Family Maternity Centre celebrate the birth of Ming Shui Lei, born just 40 seconds after midnight on New Year's day.

Experts help families make the proper food and nutrition choices

The Scarborough Hospital will be holding the third instalment of its popular **It's Time to Talk Speakers' Series on Thursday, March 1, 2012** in the General campus Auditorium.

Entitled **Food for Thought: You are What you Eat**, the free event will focus on food and nutrition, including invaluable advice for those at risk of, or living with, chronic diseases and eating disorders and their families. Speakers include physician and allied healthcare experts in their fields.

There will be a health fair from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., with presentations and

a question and answer period from 7 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

The Scarborough Hospital created the **It's Time to Talk Speakers' Series** to help families have difficult conversations around sensitive healthcare topics. Previous events have focused on Aging and Eldercare, as well as Mental Health.

Space is limited and RSVPs are required. **To reserve your spot, or for more information, contact Krishni Loganathan at 416-431-8200 ext. 6789 or kloganathan@tsh.to.**

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Recent Event



SENIOR TAMILS HONoured

The Scarborough Senior Tamils' Association honoured four Seniors over the age of ninety and seven Seniors who reached seventy-five years of age in 2011, at the Annual Christmas Day celebration of the Association held on 19th December, 2011 at the Recreation Hall of the Neilson Seniors' Apartment at 1315 Neilson Road, Scarborough.

The President of the Association Mr. K. Ramanathan presided. Guest of Honour Rev. Milton Solomon of the Tamil United Church of Canada, Scarborough delivered the Christmas Day message.

The Chief Guest, Member of Parliament for Scarborough Rouge River riding Miss Rathika Sitsabaiesan and the Special guest, Toronto City Councillor Dr. Raymond Cho honoured the Seniors.

The children and grand children of the members participated in the Annual Christmas Carol Service and entertained the Seniors.

The Past President Mr. M. Thevarajah was the MC at the ceremony.

Seen here are some photos taken at the event.





Recent Event

Sri Lankan Accountants' Association Annual Gala

The annual Dinner Dance and holiday gala by Sri Lankan Accountants' Association was held on Saturday, Dec 10th at La Gondola Banquet Hall. It was attended by members along with family and guests. There were music and dance performances for entertainment at the event and a sumptuous meal was served for dinner. Participants joined at the floor to dance their way well into the evening before calling it a night.

Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here.



Recent Event



AWARDS NIGHT BY HOMELIFE/GTA REALTY

Home Life GTA Realty celebrated its holiday Awards Night on Wednesday, Dec 14th in Markham. The event was attended by Real Estate Agents from Homelife/GTA Realty, their partners, guests and VIPs from Banking and Home Builders, Lawyers and Homelife Head Office staff.

Raja Mahendran & Eddie Woo, partners of this company recognized several agents who achieved in sales with certificates, plaques and cups.

Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here.



Photo Courtesy: Digital Gnane



Recent Event

Grand Opening of Dr. Chandra and Associates New Dental Office



Front view

Dr. Chandra and Associates opened their dental clinic at Markham & Steeles on December 10, 2011. The clinic is located in a very convenient location with ample parking and easy access to all including people by public transport.

Dr. Chandra is well known for his successful practice in Goose Bay, Newfoundland.

The opening ceremony was attended by several members of the community along with several guest attendees, Rathika Sitsabaiesan, MP-Scarborough Rouge-River, Councilor Logan Kanapathi - Town of Markham and Juanita Nathan, Area 4 Trustee for York Region District School Board.

Dr. Chandra and his wife welcomed everyone warmly and took them for tour of their clinic. The dental clinic is decorated nicely and appears equipped with brand new and latest dental chairs and X-ray equipment.

At the end there was a raffle for an iPad that was won by a guest Mrs. Smita Hattay from Whitby. She is with the iPad in one of the photos with her husband on far left and with Dr. Chandra and his wife along with Councilor Logan Kanapathi.

Guests were served with refreshments and given a gift and loot bag of dental products.

Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here.



Rathika Sitsabaiesan, MP-Scarborough Rouge-River & Councilor Logan Kanapathi - Town of Markham cutting the ribbon



Juanita Nathan, Area 4 Trustee for York Region District School Board lighting the lamp



Dr. C. P. Giri, Lawyer Gary Anandasangaree and Dr. Chandra



Left to Right: Councilor Logan Kanapathi - Town of Markham, Dr. Chandra, Mrs. Chandra, Dr. Rajes Logan & Rathika Sitsabaiesan, MP-Scarborough Rouge-River with Dr. Chandra family



One of the Dental Chairs



Mr. Hattay, Markham Councilor Logan Kanapathi, iPad winner Smita Hattay, Dr. Chandra and Mrs. Chandra

Recent Event



OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF MEHNDI TELEVISION AND BOLLYWOOD TIMES

On Thursday, December 15, 2011 FDR Media Group welcomed more than 200 people to celebrate the launch of Bollywood Times and Mehndi TV, Canada's first South Asian channels in high definition.

A mega launch event was held at the exclusive Corus Quay by the lakeside in Toronto where Canadian celebrities, high profile investors and guests were greeted upon entry with flower petals and sindoor.

Guests were offered Mehndi art on their hands to give them a taste of South Asian culture. Bhangra dancers with dhol drums, live sitar and tabla, and beautifully clad Rajnasthani dancers created an ambiance of excitement as guests walked the red carpet. Cameras flashed and the two new channels were on display on giant LCDs as they entered the event. The décor matched the television stations with its apparent polish and modern South Asian flavor.

FDR Media Group partners Prashant Pathak, David Martin, Fariba Rawhani and Ron Maitra welcomed guests from the media, Bay Street, and members of the community to join them in celebration. Brampton West Member of Parliament Kyle Seebach made a presentation to FDR Media Group on behalf of The Honourable Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism:

"On behalf of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, I would like to take this opportunity to thank both Mehndi television and Bollywood Times for your exceptional contributions to Canadian society. Mehndi television and Bollywood Times are key players in the Canadian media industry as they bring a unique perspective to Canadian television by serving Canada's multicultural population, which in return makes our nation stronger and more prosperous."

Mrs. Preeti Saran, the Consulate General of India and her associates, Ms. D. Charandasi, Consul and Head of Chancery, and Mr. Pardeep Kumar, Vice Consul (Commercial), were warmly welcomed to the gala and watched attentively as the channels were launched. Distinguished members of the South Asian community including Vasu Chanchlani of the Canada-India Foundation and Deepak Chopra of Canada Post graced the crowd with their presence as well.

FDR Media Group CEO, Ron Maitra, and President and COO, David Martin, thanked Rogers, Bell, Telus, the team at Corus Entertainment, their colleagues on Bay Street, friends and family for all of their support in launching these two channels. They also announced for the first time plans to launch three more channels in 2012!



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Team FDR



Ron and David receiving recommendation from the minister



MP, Counsel General, Ron and David

Red Carpet



MP Kyle Seebach and FDR CEO Ron Maitra, COO David Martin



Rogers John, Preeti and Annie



FDR Partners Ron, David, Fariba and Prashant

Publicist Agency

Industrialist Geetu Pathak



Senator Jerry Grafstein with FDR COO David Martin



Cinema World

A.R Rahman to conduct musical event in Jaffna, Sri Lanka North



India's Oscar winning music director A.R Rahman will soon conduct a musical event in Jaffna, Sri Lanka North to mark the opening of an Indian Cultural Centre. Jaffna Municipal Council recently announced that Indian High Commission has arranged for Rahman's performance in Jaffna for cultural centre opening ceremony.

The 45-year-old singer-composer A.R. Rahman, who won two Oscars for Best Original Music Score and Best Original Song at the 81st Academy Awards for *Slumdog Millionaire*, has his hands full this year.

On Jan 4th, 2012, A. R. Rahman told media in Chennai that music for Hollywood movie *Welcome to People* was completed about four months ago. Directed by Alex Kurtzman, this film is co-produced by Steven Spielberg.

Rahman said he will be composing music for four Indian films this year — Tamil movies *Yohan* and *Rajinikanth-*

starrer *Kochadaiyaan*, Bollywood movie *Deewana tha* and one with filmmaker Bharat Bala.

On Jan 20, 2012, A.R. Rahman will perform with a German orchestra in Mumbai. The 100-piece orchestra from Germany will also feature young musicians of KM Music Conservatory, a music school launched by Rahman himself.

"We will create a new high point for music lovers across India through these concerts. I hope to inspire youngsters to take up music composing in a big way through these concerts," Rahman told reporters.

The Babelsberg group will play Rahman's music from *Roja to Robot*, making it the first ever western classical orchestra performing the maestro's music in India.

The concert is in connection with 60 years of diplomatic relations between India and Germany.



The interesting films lined up for 2012 in Kollywood promise to enthrall the audience. Many leading actors and directors have lined up their films for this year, opening Tamil Cinema in 2012 with 'Power-packed promises' says a feature report, courtesy of The Deccan Herald:

Even stalwarts like Rajinikanth and Kamal Hassan, who have had no releases in 2011, have announced projects slated for a 2012 release. Here is a close look at what's in store for fans of the Tamil film industry.

The mere announcement of Kochadaiyaan from superstar Rajinikanth caused a sensational stir among fans and trade circles. A period film to be made in 3D, it will be directed by Soundarya Ashwin, the younger daughter of the numero uno actor. Rajni's lucky mascot and veteran filmmaker K S Ravikumar has written the story, screenplay and dialogue, with Soundarya's involvement and supervision of course. Ravikumar has said that the shooting will start after January 15, 2012. Kochadaiyaan will be produced by Eros International and Media One Global Entertainment.

"This is the first time that a 3D film with performance capturing technology is being produced in India. It will be a complete treat to the superstar's fans," says Soundarya.

You can expect the unexpected when it comes to Kamal Haasan. This perfectionist gets ready to prove this once again with *Viswaroopam*. Produced and directed by Kamal himself, the film has him playing multiple roles, one being that of a terrorist. Andrea Jeremiah and Priya Kumar are the leading ladies and music is by Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy, the trio who had worked with Kamal earlier for *Aalavandhaan*.

Supposedly a magnum opus being made at a whopping budget of Rs 120 crore, this movie is said to have utilised to the fullest the latest technology available and experts in various fields.

Ajith made his presence felt in 2011 after a long gap, with the biggest blockbuster of the year, *Mankatha*. He follows it with *Billa 2*, his 51st film. A prequel to his earlier hit *Billa* (which is a remake of a Rajinikanth-starrer of the same title), *Billa 2* deals with the life of David, an ordinary man from a fishing hamlet in Tamil Nadu, who becomes *Billa*, one of the dreaded gangsters of the world. Produced by IN Entertainment, the film is directed by Chakri Toleti, who made his debut with *Kamal Haasan's Unnaipol Oruvan*. Music will be by Yuvaan Shankar Raja.

Sunir Khetrapal, the head of IN Entertainment said, "The last schedule of *Billa 2* in Georgia is over. We are done with 93 days of shooting, only five days of work remains. The first look of the film will be unveiled during Pongal (January 14). The trailer will be released in February and the audio launch will be in March. The final release will be in April 2012 as the summer's biggest release."

Moving away from his popular 'masala entertainer' image, Vijay is shooting for *Nanban*, a remake of Bollywood blockbuster *Three Idiots*. Directed by Shankar, whose last venture *Enthiran* was a record-breaker in terms of collection, *Nanban* is being produced by Gemini Film Circuit with music by Harris Jayaraj.

Srikanth, Jiiva, Ileana D'Cruz, S J Suryah, Sathyaraj and Anuya Bhagawath have played crucial roles in the film. "Shankar has made some changes to the original script

to make it appealing to the Tamil audience," a source says.

Working with Shankar for the first time, Vijay says, "It has been my dream to act in a film directed by him. I am eagerly looking forward for the release of *Nanban*."

The Ayan combo, Suriya and K V Anand, have come together once again for *Maatraan*.

Touted as being different but well within the commercial framework of films in general, *Maatraan* is produced by Kalpathi S Aghoram's AGS Entertainment.

Says Suriya, "It is not true, as claimed by a section of the media, that *Maatraan* is about twins. All that I can say at this point in time is that it is going to be a totally different experience for the audience."

Anand says, "Suriya has always been a director's actor, and I am happy to be working with him again, after *Ayan*."

The cast and crew of *Maatraan* have recently returned from Russia, where they had a few important scenes to shoot. Sources say that the next session has begun in Chennai.

Only Tamil Nadu was aware of 3, Dhanush's forthcoming film, until recently. But things changed overnight after the online release of *Why this kolaveri di*, a track from the film. The song went on to become a huge hit across India. There are some big expectations from this movie, a maiden directorial venture of Aishwarya R Dhanush, the elder daughter of Rajinikanth.

The heroine is Shruthi Haasan, who, needless to say, is the elder daughter of Kamal Haasan. With the children of two top movie stars in South India coming together, this romantic comedy has generated a lot of hype.

Says Dhanush, "We really didn't expect kolaveri di... to become such a big hit. 3 will be a feel-good entertainer and am happy to be the protagonist in Aishwarya's first film."

After the success of *Osthi*, STR aka Simbu aka Silambarasan is busy with his next, *Vettai Mannan*. The film has Jai of Subramanyapuram fame in an important role with Hansika Motwani playing the female lead. Directed by Nelson, Vettai Mannan, a gangster flick, is produced by S S Chakravarthy of NIC Arts, who made many blockbusters starring Ajith.

Says STR, "It is an unusual thriller which will be loaded with surprises. Vettai Mannan will be full of adrenaline pumping action sequences, which will keep audiences on the edge of their seats."

Jai says, "Simbu has been my good friend for years and I feel happy to share screen space with him in *Vettai Mannan*."

Karthi Sivakumar, the hot and happening young star of Kollywood, is ready with his next release, *Saguni*. The movie is a political thriller, directed by fresher Shankar Dayal. Pranitha is the heroine.

Produced by Dream Warrior Pictures, the movie is simultaneously being made in Telugu as *Shakuni*, to cash in on Karthi's popularity in Andhra Pradesh.

Says Karthi, "For the first time ever, I am acting in a film whose subject has political undercurrents. At the same time, *Saguni* will not make any compromises on the commercial front."

Shankar Dayal says, "It is nothing short of a big gift that my first film itself is with a top actor like Karthi. He dedicated himself fully to the project and *Saguni* has shaped up very well."



Bollywood Films

Action-thriller films such as "Bodyguard" and "Singham" successfully captured the attention of many moviegoers in 2011. The trend will continue in 2012 when films such as "Players" and "Agneepath" hit the box office.

"Tezz," "Agent Vinod," "Bol Bachchan" and "Rowdy Rathore" are just a few more action films which are in the works in 2012.

Kareena Kapoor will star in four movies: "Agent Vinod" with actor Saif Ali Khan; "Taalash" with Aamir Khan; "Ek Main Aur Ekk Tu" with Imran Khan and "Heroine."

Salman Khan will be starring in Aditya Chopra's upcoming

film "Ek Tha Tiger" with Katrina Kaif. "The year looks interesting as a lot of big films are releasing; but it's all a wait and watch situation since many much-awaited films last year disappointed terribly," said film critic and historian Rajiv Vijayakar.

2012 also opens with Abbas-Mustan's action-thriller "Players" releasing Jan. 6. "Players" is based on the Hollywood thriller "The Italian Job" and stars Abhishek Bachchan, Bipasha Basu, Sonam Kapoor, Bobby Deol and Neil Nitin Mukesh.

"Chaalisi Chaurasi" will release in January and features Naseeruddin Shah, Atul Kulkarni and K.K. Menon. Two other major releases, "Agneepath" and "Shanghai," are lined up for Jan. 26. February looks like the month of love with Karan Johar's production "Ek Main Aur Ekk Tu" starring Kareena Kapoor, Imran Khan and real-life couple Ritesh Deshmukh and Genelia D'Souza starrer "Tere Naal Love Hogaya" and Bipasha Basu starring in "Jodi Breakers."

"Agent Vinod" featuring Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor is likely to release in March. After "The Dirty Picture" released, Vidya Balan and Emraan Hashmi will be seen again on the silver screen in Sujoy Ghosh's thriller "Kahaani" releasing Mar. 9. The month of April will consist of sequels: Sajid

Khan's "Housefull 2," Ekta Kapoor's "Kyaa Super Kool Hain Hum" and Mahesh Bhatt's "Jannat 2." Vidhu Vinod Chopra's "Ferrari Ki Sawaari" releases in April. Karisma Kapoor will make her comeback on the big screen in "Dangerous Ishq," releasing in June. The thriller stars Rajneesh Duggal and Jimmy Shergill. Aamir Khan's "Taalash," starring Kareena Kapoor and Rani Mukherjee will release this month.

Akshay Kumar returns as an action hero in "Rowdy Rathore" directed by Prabhu Deva. The film, produced by Sanjay Leela Bhansali, is a remake of the Telugu film "Vikramarkudu."

In July, Rohit Shetty will be seen tickling the funny bone with "Bol Bachchan," an action-comedy starring Abhishek Bachchan, Ajay Devgn, Asin and Prachi Desai. Two of Akshay's films, "Once Upon a Time in Mumbai 2" and "Joker," will keep viewers in August busy.

Abbas-Mustan will release "Race 2" in November. Akshay will make his comeback as the khiladi of Bollywood with "Khiladi 786," releasing in the same month. The year may end with a sequel to "Dabangg."

Other films expected to hit cinema houses in 2012 include Karan Johar's "Student of the Year," Hrithik Roshan's "Krrish 3" and Anurag Basu's "Barfee."

- PTI

JOHN BODDY HOMES PRESENTS 'EAGLE GLEN'

John Boddy Homes has been voted 'Best Builder' in Ajax/Pickering for the fifteenth year in a row for this year's Readers' Choice Awards and has released its next phase at their 'Eagle Glen' community in Ajax. Located just minutes east of Toronto 'Eagle Glen' combines the closeness and convenience of city living with a suburban feel, and its prime location makes it a great place to call home. Classic two-storey homes are available, as well as side and back splits. Homes start at 2,553 square feet and range up to a spacious 3,534 square feet. John Boddy Homes offers traditional size lots with a minimum of 105 feet in depth and a great selection of extra deep lots, pie shaped lots and walk out basements. With such a broad range of house sizes and styles 'Eagle Glen' has the ideal home to suit every preference. From the unique exteriors and charming streetscapes to the elegant interiors, various John Boddy Homes include such impressive standard features as vaulted ceilings, double door entries, décor columns, mirrored sliding closet doors, ceramic kitchen backsplashes, double basin bathroom vanities with make-up counters and so much more. Their gourmet kitchens, welcoming great rooms with cozy gas fireplaces and elegant dining rooms with coffered ceilings are all spacious and comfortable, making them the perfect location to enjoy time together with family or entertaining friends. In addition, some models include such impressive extras as classic French doors, transom windows and custom octagonal skylights allowing light to travel throughout the home for a bright and spacious feel.

For their homeowner's convenience, most John Boddy Homes include main or second floor laundry rooms, laundry chutes, kitchen breakfast bars, private water closets, interior garage access, high efficiency furnaces and basement rough-ins for future bathrooms. Also, windows are vinyl clad wood which allows for interior custom colours with a maintenance free exterior. Other features include arched entryways, custom millwork, window mullions on all front and rear facades and decorative garage doors featuring appealing window lites. Custom landscaping packages and paved driveways are also included in all homes providing the renowned curb appeal that enhances the entire 'Eagle Glen' community.

Innovative floorplan designs combined with an extensive array of standard features included with every new home have become a corporate trademark of John Boddy Homes and 'Eagle Glen'. Not only does a John Boddy home offer such striking standard features, there are also a wealth of opportunities to upgrade, making their homes as unique as each individual homeowner. The 'Eagle Glen' Sales Office features a Décor Centre that contains a wide range of upgrade items to select from in order to customize your home. Their high-tech electrical and décor consultants allow homebuyers to make upgrade selections on site, enabling them to conveniently personalize their home.

When you purchase a new home in 'Eagle Glen'



The Stonegate



Eagle Glen - Model to View



The Parklane - Model to View

there are no hidden closing costs. John Boddy Homes pays for education levies, development charges, water and hydro meter hookup fees, boulevard tree planting, landscape package and a paved driveway.

Currently John Boddy Homes is offering an incentive package of \$3,000 in free upgrades or 5 appliances to all new home purchasers. Also included is one year of Rogers' services for free! Included in this package are home phone with 150 long distance minutes and 2 calling features, personal TV with free rental of a standard definition box, a HD digital box, VIP package, free on demand programming, Canadian timeshifting channels as well as Rogers Hi-Speed internet service and all are installed for free.

The 'Eagle Glen' community offers many important neighbourhood amenities such as a brand new on-site public elementary school, places of worship, fully equipped parks and easy access to both Ajax and Go-Transit Services. Toronto is easily accessible from nearby Highways 401 and 407. Located just north of a host of shopping and recreation centres, 'Eagle Glen' allows residents all the amenities of the urban lifestyle while providing the beauty and tranquility of the neighbouring countryside.

Since 1955, John Boddy has been involved in the construction of thousands of new homes throughout Ontario, and has earned a reputation as an accom-

plished builder of fine residential communities. Of significance are the award winning 1000-acre 'Bridlewood Community' developed during the 1960's and 1970's in Scarborough, the 'Forestbrook' Community in Pickering developed in the 1980's, 'Willowcreek' in Peterborough, and 'Eagle Ridge on the Green' in Ajax developed in the 1990's and early 2000's.

The John Boddy Homes' team of experienced management, planners, designers, supervisors, marketing and sales personnel have distinguished themselves by creating innovative and unique designs in truly outstanding communities that meet the needs and desires of today's families.

With three fully furnished model homes a visit to 'Eagle Glen' is a must. Drop by the Sales Presentation Centre located on Stevensgate Drive, north of Rossland Road West, one half kilometre west of Westney Road three kilometres north of Hwy. 401. Sales office hours are Monday through Thursday 1:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Saturday, Sunday and Holidays 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; closed Friday. Let their friendly knowledgeable staff help you determine which of the many home styles available is perfect for you and your family and get set to join the ever-growing 'Eagle Glen' family community.

For more information, please call (905) 619-1777 or visit their website at www.johnboddy-homes.com.

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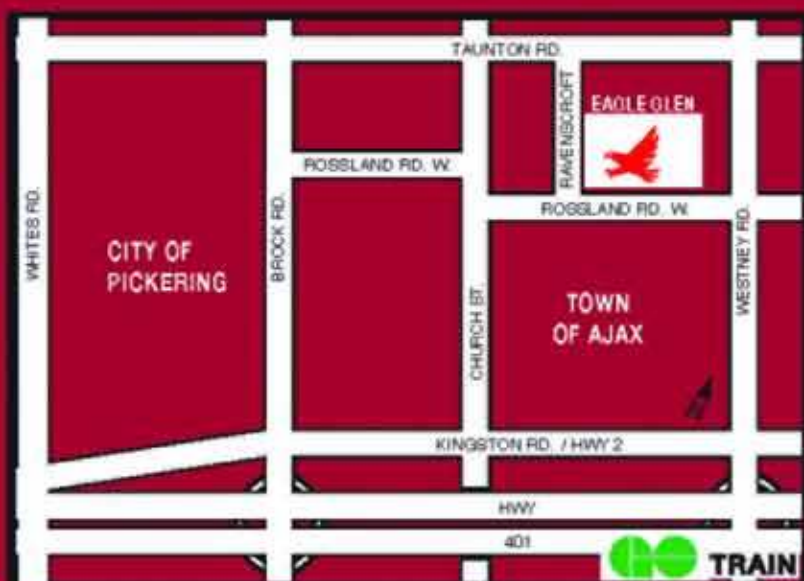
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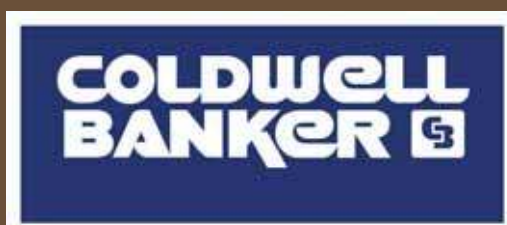
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Recent Event

Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce Hosts Holiday Mixer

RICHMOND HILL - The Canadian Tamils' Chamber of Commerce (CTCC) Holiday Business Mixer brought in many members and guests to the Sheraton Hotel on December 14th, 2011. The night began with a greeting from the President Mr. Mike Ahilan addressing the upcoming events and the CTCC's exciting future ahead.

The night carried on with guest speakers Mr. Jorge

Ramos and Mr. Michael Mazza. Mr. Jorge Ramos, Director of Sales, National Accounts of Industrial Alliance spoke about the importance of legacy giving and how to create a legacy fund.

Mr. Michael Mazza, President & CEO of The Scarborough Hospital Foundation (TSHF) gave a presentation on how vital the community is in fundraising for new equipment for the hospital, and the joint part-

nership between CTCC and TSHF. One of the mandates that the CTCC incorporates is charity and giving back to the community and with the support of the members and sponsors of the CTCC this mission continues to be possible.

For more information on the CTCC please visit www.ctcc.ca.

Photo Courtesy: Ninaivukal.com



**Notice for
Quarterly Meeting**

**Canadian Tamils'
Chamber of Commerce**

Date/Time: Wednesday, January
25th, 2012 at 7:00 PM.

Venue: Merlyn's Taste of
World Restaurant,
5284 Highway 7 East,
Markham, ON, L3P 1B9
(McCowan & Hwy 7)
RSVP by
e-mail: info@ctcc.ca
Tel: 416-335-9791



Tribute



Appreciation

V.S. Thuraiajah (Architect)

By Siva Sivapragasam

He was known among professionals as an Architect in his chosen profession. But he was better known to many as a person who forged a close link with Tamil culture and its traditions.

The recent passing away of Architect Thuraiajah in Sydney, Australia brings yet another end to a chapter in the history of outstanding personalities in the Tamil community who contributed their skill and ability to mark milestones in the history of the community.

The Late V.S. Thuraiajah was born in Navaly in the Jaffna district as one of the siblings of a large family. His father passed away when young Thuraiajah was seven years old and it was left to his mother to raise him along with his brothers and sisters. He had his early education at the Green Memorial School and later at the prestigious Manipay Hindu College. His interest in Architecture took him to Bombay where he obtained his Diploma in Architecture in 1951. On his return from India he worked for the Public Works Department and later in 1964 he ventured into private practice which he continued until 2009. He earned a number of qualifications in his professional field from leading institutions and many of his articles on Architecture were published in local newspapers. His repertoire of designs ranged from residential homes, hospitals, hotels, university com-



plexes, Libraries, factories and Hindu temples built not only in Sri Lanka but in India, Middle East and Australia. He is

fondly remembered as the Architect who raised the war damaged Jaffna Library to its original glory and prestige. His

interest in Agriculture made him develop a farm in Mankulam and also an ice factory for the fishing industry. His cultural interest made him produce "Kuthu Vilakku", a Tamil feature film. He was also connected with the Media when he functioned for a brief period as the Chairman of the Company that published the popular Jaffna based Tamil newspaper "Eelanadu"

Mr. Thuraiajah is perhaps best known among the Tamil community for his pioneering work and untiring efforts connected with the International Association of Tamil Research (IATR). Due to the unsettled conditions in Sri Lanka Mr. Thuraiajah migrated to Australia along with his family and continued his professional and cultural activities for the Tamil community there. He leaves behind his wife Selvaranie, children Vathsala, Manjula, Surendran, Sasi and grandchildren Meera, Rishyan, Sujan, Sarala, Sarita, Maya, Shreya and brothers Dr. V.S. Karunakaran & V.S. Gananathan.

The Late Mr. Thuraiajah was perhaps one of the few professionals who was heavily involved in cultural pursuits connected with his community. His enthusiasm and commitment towards this goal will long be cherished and remembered by the Tamil generations to come. His passing away certainly creates a vacuum in the generation of the Tamil community.

Pongal = "Spillover"

Meaning of Thai Pongal

This is a harvest festival - the Tamil equivalent of Thanksgiving. It is held to honor the Sun, for a bountiful harvest. Families gather to rejoice and share their joy and their harvests with others. The Sun is offered a "Pongal" of rice and milk.

There is much excitement and preparation. New clothes are made or bought. The homes and yards are cleaned days ahead. Tasty aromas of Palakaram (sweet snacks) fill the air for days ahead.

On the day of Pongal, early in the morning, everyone bathes and wears new clothes.

Family members then jointly draw the kolam (a decoration laid on the floor). Rice flour (plain and coloured) is used to draw the kolam. Parallel straight lines can be drawn using a cylindrical rod (Ulakai) as a guide. A kolam can be a plain one or can be artistically drawn with symbols of cosmic

interest. The kolam defines the sacred area where the pongal is prepared.

Within the perimeters of kolam, typically, firewood is used to cook the rice. The Pongal is set up in the direct view of the Sun (East). Traditionally, the kolam is laid in the front or side of the house, but in cold climes where cooking indoors with firewood is hazardous, the pongal can be prepared in kitchen and brought to the location where kolam is set up (which could be indoors, like your Sun-room!).

The moment of climax is the spill over of the pongal during cooking. The spillover of milk is a propitious symbol of abundance. Sometimes, firecrackers are lit to signify the moment.

Once the pongal is ready a Padayal (the offering) is first made. Sharing of the Pongal with friends and relatives follows a few minutes of meditation or a prayer.

When is Thai Pongal Celebrated?



Thai Pongal is celebrated on January 14th every year. The month of Thai (January) is the harvest season in the Tamil homeland spanning from Tamil Nadu to Tamil Eelam. Pongal refers to rice cooked in milk and sweetened with brown sugar (chakkarai, from which the English word jaggery is derived). On a full scale it is a three-day festival of nature-worship. It includes feeding the birds that are part of the beauty of nature, and offering thanks to the cattle, Mattu Pongal, which gives milk and plough the fields. Jallikkattu is a peaceful sport involving bulls celebrated by young men as a part of 3-day Thai

Pongal.

Pongal Recipe:

1. Pongal Paanai (clay-pot) is decorated around its neck with mango leaves.
2. Boil water & milk (without the rice) in the paanai.
3. When the milk spills over say "Pongal, Oh Pongal" and add rice to the paanai.
4. Once the rice is cooked, add chakkarai, katkandu (sugar), honey, raisins & cashews.
5. Few pods of Cardamom enhance the flavor of pongal.
6. Once the mixture is ready for serving set up the Padayal on three banana leaf plates.

After a few minutes of meditation or prayer by the family & friends, Pongal is served. The Padayal is offered to the senior members of the family first.

Source: Books (cannot be found in Amazon.Com): Jaffna The Land of the Lute, Saveri, (ISBN-09681597-0-2), Jaffna 1980 by W. Robert Holmes

By Sangam.org



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Special Feature



Righteousness as the True Foundation of Happiness

by J.J. Atputharajah

A. The Nature of Righteous Living:

Ancient Tamil classics, religious books and historical (human experience) abound with instances of how true happiness can be found only through righteous means. 'Arathan varuvathay inbam, Mat ellam puraththa, puharlum illa'-Valluvar. History has various episodes of happenings in several countries in the world where wicked leaders led their countries to disaster. The stories of Hitler, Napoleon, the Czars of Russia and Nero of Italy are but few leaders who led their countries to rack and ruin. Lord Acton, the famous historian says that power corrupts and power corrupts absolutely. Valluvar put it succinctly when he said, "Arathan varu vathe Inpam, mat ellam purattha, puhalum illa. When translated it means 'Happiness comes from righteous virtues; acting otherwise is unworthy and infamous. "Ravanana, the king of Lanka fell head over heels in love with another man's wife. He captured her stealthily but was unable to fulfill his desires but on the other hand lost all his power and glory. Though he had the blessings of Lord Siva his abominable sin led to his damnation. When people lose their self control they become slave to their greed and bring dig their own graves. That is why the Bible says, "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to it."

B. Problems of Negative Living:

Whether it is personal lives or in the lives of nations, evil deeds bring about disaster. Both Hitler and Napoleon became slaves to power. Napoleon wanted to conquer the whole of Europe but got defeated at the battle of Waterloo by Britain and its allies. The love of power and aggrandisement sees no limits bringing about the fatal end. Hitler suffered the same fate. He was proud of his ethnic group and wanted to wield his power over Europe. His one nation concept denting the national consciousness of their countries united his opponents and brought about his defeat and disappearance. Napoleon had all the capabilities of a peace time leader. His administrative talents are still valued in France. He is the one who got the laws of France in shape by his Code De Napoleon. However his imperial ambitions failed him. Colonel Gaddafi who met his end recent-



ly is another example of military men who ruled without valuing the opinions of others. It is a proof of the fact that might can survive only until you are capable of defending yourself. Four decades of hectic misrule ended violently and Gaddafi was added to the list of notorious mis-adventurers.

C. Beautiful Attitudes of Mind:

Jesus Christ of Nazareth defined righteousness as the end product of the beautiful attitudes of the mind. they were termed beatitudes. The beatitudes are comprised of three elements: a pronouncement of blessing, a quality of life and a reason why the recipient should be considered blessed. The first element is found in the word blessed which introduces each beatitude. The second element gives a composite picture of the kind of person who will inherit the kingdom of God. The third element looks ahead to some aspects of the kingdom of God. If a person is to lead a righteous life he must have certain qualities of mind. God blesses the humble, the repentant, the meek, those who are willing to do the right things, who are kind, who are pure, who crave for peace, and those who can bear any kind of suffering to do the right thing or traverse the path of righteousness. No amount of power or wealth is going to grant eternal happiness.

D. Modern Science and

Happiness:

Modern science and psychology has not discovered what makes people happy. The general analysis is that people who have one or more close friendships are happier. People who volunteer or simply care for others on a consistent basis seem to be happier than others. Regular exercise has been associated with improved mental well-being and a lower incidence of depression. If we are deeply involved in trying to reach a goal, or an activity that is challenging but well suited to our skills, we experience a joyful feeling. Studies also reveal that there is a close link between spiritual / religious practice and happiness. Studies by experts in positive psychology also show that happiest people are those who have discovered their unique strengths and virtues and use those strengths for a purpose that is greater than their own personal goals. Moreover, grateful people have been shown to have greater positive emotion, a greater sense of belonging and lower incidence of depression and stress.

When one pursues the path of righteousness, it gives them a strong positive self-confidence which will ensure a peace of mind that is impregnable. As one hymn reminds us, "Choose the right!, There is peace in righteous doing". The present is an age of pleasure-seeking, and men are losing their sanity in a mad rush for sensations that do but excite and disappoint. Righteously begotten happi-

ness leaves no bad after-taste.; it is followed by no depressing reaction. It is only pleasure that often makes repentance and contrition necessary. Each night on the TV news, we hardly ever hear good news. It is the bad side of life we hear about-death, accidents, floods, wars, violence. Even so there are great things happening each and everyday-untold stories of love and charity,. Hep from here and there and everywhere. It may not be news, but it is uplifting and character- building.

E. The Need for Righteous Living:

The essence of happiness is righteous living. Happiness is the result of living a life that conforms to universally accepted moral precepts. The pleasures of worldly life cannot give us lasting happiness or joy. Men should utilise their religious convictions to enable them to traverse the righteous path though they will be faced with innumerable obstacles. There is no quick road to happiness. It just takes honest to goodness work, patience and endurance. Problems and calamities help us to get better. They help us to complete and fulfill us. When we overcome the frailties of human deficiencies, we will harvest peace and joy beyond understanding. Proven character grants us complete peace and contentment essential for lasting happiness. Peace rewards goodness and graciousness.



Spirituality

WORDS OF PEACE

European Parliament Welcomes Back Ambassador of Peace

Written by
The Prem Rawat Foundation

The 1st Vice President of the European Parliament, the Honorable Gianni Pittella, hosted an international conference titled: "Peace and Well-being, addressing the founding values of the European Union" on November 28.

Against a backdrop of international uncertainty, including riots in many European cities, government change and continued unrest in the Middle East, an audience of institutional representatives and MEPs joined academics and business people from more than 25 countries to explore the most pressing issues facing Europe and the world today: peace and well-being.

Gianni Pittella and keynote speaker



Prem Rawat were introduced by Dr. Anthony Seldon, political historian, author, journalist, and current Headmaster of Wellington College (UK). Referring to Ambassador of Peace Prem Rawat, Dr. Seldon commented, "Peace — what a wonderful country to be Ambassador for."

Dr. Seldon then set the scene for the event by inviting the whole audience to pause for a moment of silent reflection, describing the feeling of peace as an "ineffable and indescribable experience, which is here now."

Ambassador of Peace Prem Rawat spoke from the heart and without notes, focusing on the personal need for peace, "one day at a time, one person at a time." He touched on the issue of conflict, point-

ing out that "wars happen because people lose respect for each other." Emphasizing the human connection people have with each other, he added, "Every single being

principles of the Lisbon Treaty 2009, and the Charter of Fundamental Rights. It promotes the development of peace and peace education to enhance the well-

the Sahara Group in India; and the Honorable Nicolo Cristaldi MEP (Italy) and Mayor of Mazara Del Vallo, Sicily, who had recently invited Mr. Rawat to



on the face of this earth is your neighbor."

Referring to the recent low General Election turnout in one European country, Mr. Rawat commented, "Democracy is a few serving the many. Today, democracy has become the many serving the few. I'm not a politician, but I am a human being who holds very close to his heart the fundamental possibility of peace on this earth." He said that "peace is in the heart of human beings, not in the mind of human beings" and concluded, "Peace needs to be given the chance to happen. We have tried everything else."

Mr. Pittella and Mr. Rawat took questions from students from the Red Cross Nordic United World College, and then the EU representatives present were invited to show public commitment to peace and well-being by signing the "Pledge to Peace." Inspired by the lectures of Prem Rawat and his message of personal peace, the Pledge to Peace was created under the patronage of Gianni Pittella. It is a call to action to do something tangible for peace in 2012 and beyond.

Mr. Pittella explained, "the Pledge to Peace is based upon the founding principles of the European Union, the core

being of its peoples."

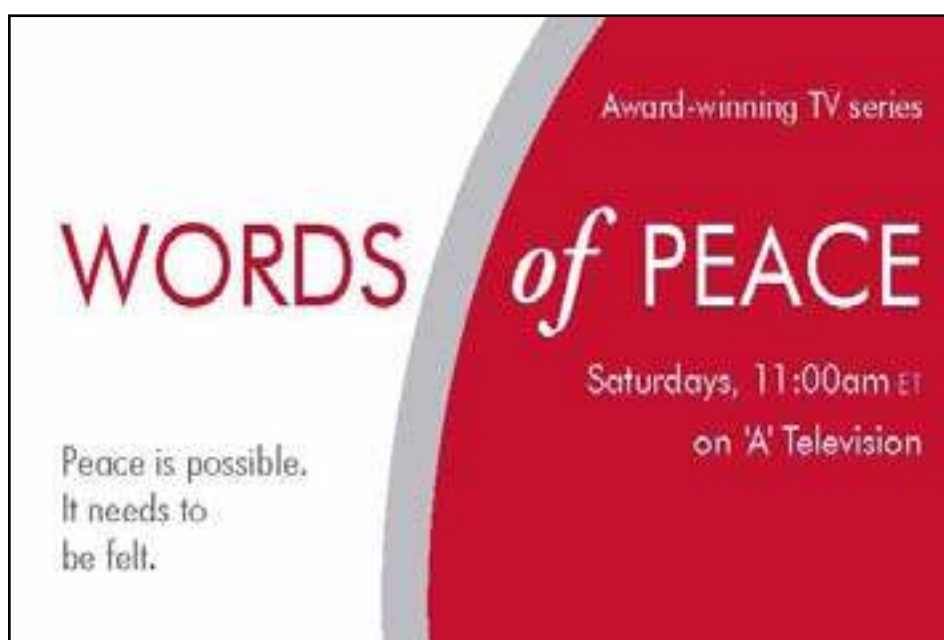
After the Pledge to Peace was signed by Mr. Pittella and Mr. Rawat, the first signatory was Linda Pascotto, President of The Prem Rawat Foundation. The Foundation promotes Prem Rawat's message of peace and his vision of addressing fundamental human needs so that people everywhere can live with dignity, peace and prosperity.

Founding signatories of the Pledge included UN Peace Day creator, Jeremy Gilley from England; Mr. Seemanto Roy, son of Subrata Roy Sahara, Chairman of

speak on the topic of peace in that region. Each took a few moments to explain to the audience why they were adding their names to the document, and their own projects in service of peace. Their signatures were followed by those of representative dignitaries from across Europe.

The Secretariat for the Peace and Well-being conference was provided by Associazione Percorsi.

Photo courtesy: The Prem Rawat Foundation.



Spirituality



GurMandir Children Celebrate Christmas

by Dr. Kanayalal Raina

Santa Claus delighted the young children who arrived at GurMandir accompanied by his assistant with loads of gifts and sweets.

Santa Claus entered the hall as a fat, jolly man wearing his red Santa suit, to the delight of children and their parents who had gathered to welcome Santa Claus. The children earlier enjoyed the Christmas carols that began evening program before Santa's exciting arrival from the North Pole. Preeti Ajwani, a volunteer for the event helped to keep the children calm, led the children in Christmas carolling, and entertained as they anxiously awaited the arrival of Santa. A skit was prepared and Dorothy, Hema, Namrata, Bharata, Vivek, Gurdeep, Haishal and Esha did an excellent job and delighted the crowd watching them anxiously and repeatedly cheering their skills and talent.

Later they all had a tough time in taking individual photographs the anonymous Santa who was carrying a huge bag loaded with gifts on his shoulder, distributed the gifts to each and

every child present there.

It was indeed an experience to witness Santa hopping around and entertaining the youngsters with an abundance of energy and joy, mingling with everybody, and handing out gifts to one and all.

Christmas marks celebration, joy and happiness. Christmas signifies love and peace. Christmas gifts are an ideal way to express your love and affection to our loved ones. Since time immemorial, people have been giving beautiful Christmas gifts to each other. It is believed that to some extent the health of the economy, depends on it. We all love to do shopping especially during the Christmas holidays. Shopping malls, as everyone knows, have become the global consumer holiday. However, believe me there is still plenty of love, charity and family bonding at this time of the year.

Every child left smiling brilliantly, as they, received their gifts and Christmas wishes from Santa. Santa promised to return next year and the children ended the day with a wonderful dinner and dessert.



Canada Hindu Heritage Centre celebrates Christmas singing carols



by Dr. Kanayalal Raina

At the Canada Hindu Heritage Centre in Mississauga Ontario, Christmas was celebrated in style, when Santa Claus (Pt Roopnauth Sharma-spiritual leader of Mississauga Ram Mandir) arrived accompanied by his four assistants with lots of gifts and sweets.

The children earlier enjoyed the magic show and Christmas carols that began the afternoon before Santa's exciting arrival from the North Pole. Indira Sharma, a volunteer for the event helped to keep the children calm and entertained as they anxiously awaited the arrival of Santa. She led the children in Christmas carolling and inviting the children to share their ideas on what Santa would be looking for in a "good" boy or girl.

Santa Claus entered the hall as a fat, jolly man wearing his red Santa suit, to the delight of over 180 children and their parents who had gathered to welcome Santa Claus. Everyone stood up to receive him with a thunderous applause. Santa Claus, as we are told, is also known as Saint Nicholas, Father Christmas, Kris Kringle, or simply "Santa". This is a historical, legendary and mythical figure that, in Western culture is described as bringing gifts on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day or on his feast day. The legend may have its basis in hagiographical tales concerning the historical figure of Saint Nicholas.

Approximately over 180 young children from the ages of 1 to 10 and slightly over 100 elderly citizens had gathered at CHHC. They all had a tough time trying to touch and feel Santa's presence, to try to ease their desire and inner thoughts in the celebration of joyful noise. Our anonymous Santa was carrying a huge bag loaded with gifts on his shoulder.

It was indeed an experience to witness Santa hopping around and entertaining the youngsters with an abundance of energy and joy, mingling with everybody, and handing out gifts to one

and all. Finally, he took his seat on the stage beside a well decorated Christmas tree. The present day Christmas tree goes back to the worship of sacred trees by the various religions including Hindus, who too across the world celebrate Christmas with great enthusiasm.

Christmas marks celebration, joy and happiness. Christmas signifies love and peace. Christmas gifts are an ideal way to express your love and affection to our loved ones. Since time immemorial, people have been giving beautiful Christmas gifts to each other. It is believed that to some extent the health of the economy, depends on it. We all love to do shopping especially during the Christmas holidays. Shopping malls, as everyone knows, have become the global consumer holiday. However, believe me there is still plenty of love, charity and family bonding at this time of the year.

If you visit your favourite church or temple as we all consider ourselves as children of God and are bound to Him and one another with the bond of love real faith as it invariably produces holiness of heart and righteousness. "Without faith, it is impossible to please God". It is said that God within us can only have meaning if one really believes the God within us.

You will really find Him in the silence and or joy or sorrow at the centre of our being by decorating a Christmas tree and keeping its traditions alive. With this faith people decorate their homes for grand Christmas parties. Bells, stars and candies are hung to the Christmas tree to welcome Him.

Every child left smiling brilliantly, as they, received their gifts and Christmas wishes from Santa. All of the children were so impressed that Santa made a special visit to Ram Mandir to celebrate the Christmas season, in hopes that he would still bring gifts on Christmas day. Santa promised to return next year and the children ended the day with a wonderful dinner and dessert.



Spirituality

Rising Beyond Religion

You believe in things that you have not seen and experienced. This has become the basis of all conflict.

The moment man became religious should have been the end of all conflict, but unfortunately, everywhere in the world, religion has become the main source of conflict. This has taken the maximum number of lives and caused the maximum amount of pain on the planet for thousands of years. This is only because people believe in something that is not a reality for them. Somebody believes in something, somebody else believes in something else, and naturally conflict cannot be avoided. Today or tomorrow they are going to fight. They may avoid conflict for some time, but some day they will fight. As long as you believe that only your way is right, and somebody else believes his way is right, you are bound to fight.

Though all religions started as an inward path, over time they have gotten twisted up and have simply become a set of beliefs. Though all religions have taught about the value of a human life, for the sake of the same religion, today you are willing to take each other's lives. Unfortunately, much pain and conflict has risen in this planet because of this. This basic problem has not been properly addressed. People are always trying to do patch up jobs between one group and the other, but they do not last for long and somewhere conflict will arise - the basis being, people only believe in something, something which is not yet a reality for them. If you come down to reality, it is the same reality for everybody, no matter what religious background you come from. When you come to belief, each group has their own belief of what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false. You believe in things that you have not seen and experienced. This has become the basis of all conflict.

The basic purpose of yoga has always been to pursue religion as an experience, as an inner experience, not as a belief. Don't start with any belief; start looking inward. Whatever is true, experience it and go further, approach it as a science, not as a belief. In yoga, we just see that fundamentally a human being can grow or reach his Ultimate Nature, God or the Divine, or whatever you would like to call it, by approaching it either through the body, the mind, emotion, or through inner energies. These are the only four realities that you know. Everything else is imagined. Everything else has been taught to you.

These are the four basic ways of yoga. If the body is used for growth, it is karma yoga. If the mind or intelligence is used, it is gnana yoga. If emotion - love and devotion are used, then it is bhakti yoga. If you transform your energies and grow, it is kriya yoga. This is just like referring to head, heart, hands and energy. That is



Sadhguru Vasudev is a realized master, yogi and mystic, who has founded Isha Foundation, an international public service organization that strives for ultimate human well-being.

For world-wide program information,
visit www.ishafoundation.org

Toronto local contact 1-866-424-ISHA (4742) or email Toronto@ishafoundation.org



what you are; that is what every human being is. Nobody is all head, or all heart, or all hands, or all energy, they are a combination of these four dimensions.

So, if a person has to grow, he needs a combination of these four paths of bhakti, gnana, kriya and karma. All the four need to be there in your life, only then there is growth. Only then there is a possibility of reaching the Ultimate Nature. Otherwise we have groups, and groups, and groups - quarrelling groups everywhere. Spiritually, there is nothing happening. Unless something of true value happens within a person, nothing of tremendous value can be done in the external world. Whatever you do, it is only your quality that you are going to spread. Whether you like it or not, this is

the reality. Who you are is what you are going to spread everywhere. If you are concerned about the world, the first thing is that you must be willing to transform yourself.

Yoga is about "I am willing to change myself." This is not about wanting to change the world - you are willing to change. Only when you are willing to change, a change can really happen in this world. But when you say, "I want everybody else to change," only conflict will occur. Only when you are willing to change, there will be transformation. It is this self-transformation that will lead to true well-being for the individual and the society. This is a true revolution.

Sadhguru J. Vasudev is a contemporary mystic rooted as strongly in worldly

and pragmatic matters as he is in inner experience and wisdom. Named one of India's 50 most influential people, he has addressed prominent global forums on issues as diverse as socio-economic development, leadership and spirituality. He has served as delegate to the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit and the World Peace Congress and has been a special invitee to the World Economic Forum (2006-2009), the Australian Leadership Retreat (2006) and TED (2009).

His interviews are featured in The New York Times, BBC, Bloomberg, CNNI and CNBC. He is the author of several books, the subject of four books and co-author of the Amazon Bestseller "Midnights with the Mystic". His public talks frequently draw crowds of over 300,000 people.

Founded by Sadhguru, Isha Foundation is a non-religious, non-profit organization with over 200 centers world-wide and over one million volunteers. Isha Foundation offers Inner Engineering Online - a practical approach for inner transformation in a fast paced world. The course designed by Sadhguru presents simple, yet powerful tools for an individual to experience life on a deeper level with more awareness, energy, and productivity. This program is an ideal opportunity for those with time and travel constraints to experience the same profound effects of the traditional Inner Engineering program, which has impacted millions of people over the past 25 years. To learn more, view the free Introductory Talk, or to register visit www.InnerEngineering.com

Sadhguruvudan Isha Yoga in Tamil

Date: 11 - 13 May 2012

Location: TBA
Toronto, ON Canada MAP

Session Info:

Friday, May 4th

5.00 PM - 6.15 PM Check-in
6.30 PM - 9.30 PM Class

Saturday, May 5th

8.30 AM - 7.00 PM

(Wholesome Vegetarian lunch provided)

Sunday, May 6th

7.30 AM - 7.00 PM (Wholesome Vegetarian
breakfast and lunch provided)

Details: This program is conducted by
Sadhguru.

Contact 1:

Phone: 416-300-3010

Email: toronto@ishafoundation.org

Contact 2:

Phone: 647-857-4742

Short Story

By: SIVAGAMI

Seamlessly blending in the dark were Galleface hotel and a cluster of sprawling buildings; against their parapet walls, lapped the morning tides of the Indian Ocean; the sun was rising at the horizon and the darkness would recede soon. In that darkness, they formed a single-file right in front of one of the buildings---the US embassy in Colombo, Srilanka. They all looked almost the same, scraggy fellows in sarongs and banyans or worn out batik shirts, oily face, empty handed. The freshly cleaned wet ground dried out by their shuffling bare feet. The coming brightness though brought a new set of people: this time they came by cars and

called back. The officer who interviewed Rajan didn't even acknowledge his pleasantries, and quickly fired the preset questions like a robot.

"Are you a physician?"

"Yes, sir"

"How long have you been practicing?"

"I have just graduated,--- I'm going to start at Colombo hospital"

"Why do you want to go to the USA?"

"I want to visit my sisters and also like to tour the country"

The officer picked up the documents and asked him to wait. Rajan went back and sat in the corner, eying the counter like a vulture; he felt as if his heart was about to come out of his mouth. He was disappointed that he failed to elaborate

dotted the land scape, giving the brown backdrop a light green patina. A late lunch had been arranged for Mahendrans at Malini's house in southern California. Malini had met Mr & Mrs. Mahendran in Srilankan get-togethers but never had the opportunity to get to know them well. In one of those parties they had casually mentioned that they had two college going daughters and the older one was graduating that year and they were looking to get her married. It caught Malini's attention when they said that their daughters were receptive to the notion of arranged marriage---an improvised version though, in which an introduction would take place and further development depended on personal

known as "Gatsby Events" locally, and envied their freewheeling extravagance.

Maya was the oldest daughter of Mahendrans, graduated from the University of Southern California that year. She had dated a few local boys in high school and college but nothing lasted long enough. She had been successfully deflecting their question of marriage while in college, and now that she had completed, she couldn't ignore them anymore. When her parents told her the details about Rajan, she really freaked out. How could they even consider someone who grew up in Srilanka to be her husband?, she protested. It was difficult for her to even think about talking to someone in Srilanka, let alone meeting,



THE AMERICAN DREAM

trishaws, carrying satchels and briefcases and in their best suits and skirts and sarees. They exchanged places with the scraggy men without much exchange except small money exchange inconspicuously. The peon counted and let in the first thirty new applicants for the day for visitors visa and the rest, to their disappointment, were asked to try on another day. This created scuffles and heated arguments outside, but once the gate was shut behind, it quickly faded away. The selected were herded in to a large waiting area, separated from other types of visa applicants. As soon as they sat, they all simultaneously opened their satchels and shuffled papers and documents-- no time for small talk.

Rajan was happy and nervous: happy that he managed to get in; and nervous about the whole process; it's how you persuade the officer in that short time that will make or break, the successful people had told him. If the immigration officer came back quickly, it would be a bad news, they said. Rajan had gone over the prospective questions many times, but still had his doubts about his prospects. He was a recent medical graduate from Colombo who had cleared USMLE-- the prerequisite for American residency, but his was a catch 22: on the one hand you need to secure a residency for worker's visa, and on the other hand you need a visa to secure a residency. His sisters in California had told him to obtain visitors visa; they felt it wasn't safe for him to live there anymore. The civil war was spilling over in to the south where he was, and being a minority Tamil, it was considered prudent to get out.

The numbers flipped over on the electronic pads over the booths and Rajan, who was a self-assured man, was feeling the nervous vibes around him; every passing minute brought more anxiety to the applicants; and one could read the results on their faces when they were



his answers, cursed himself for being nervous in that brief moment. He prayed that the officer would take ample time to read the documents. But it didn't happen, he was beckoned too soon and his passport was sitting on top of the documents--he was told that his application had been rejected and to appeal within thirty days. He quickly opened the passport and leafed through the pages and muttered "shit" when he saw the United States seal confirming his rejection. He knew by the experience of others that no officer was going to overturn a rejection already stamped on the passport.

The car was billowing clouds of dust as it sped on the dirt road; the air conditioners were in overdrive, battling the scorching desert sun; the joshua trees

choices. When Malini broached the subject of her doctor brother in Srilanka, it didn't entice Mahendrans at the outset. But something made them reconsider: was it the lavish life style they saw on a daily basis among Srilankan physicians?

In early eighties a couple of Srilankan physicians tried their luck, against their intuition, in this God-forsaken sun baked desert; and when the population expanded, thanks to the burgeoning air force base, they hit the jackpot. This created more needs, and this in turn brought more Srilankan doctors and in no time they formed a small community. Their medical business slowly mushroomed in to real estate and other ventures and made them fabulously wealthy. Mahendrans had been to their parties,

but by the persistence of her obstinate parents that's what she finally agreed to. But she had her other reasons too: first, her grandmother whom she had seen only in pictures; and second, the country itself which she had heard so much about from her parents but, because of the ongoing civil war, never set foot in.

Her uncle whom she was very comfortable with, due to his frequent business travels to California, came to the airport to pick her up when she landed in Colombo. What a commotion they had to go through to get to Wellawatte, where his family and her grandmother lived. The family was so happy to meet her, had prepared a large feast in her honor. They all spoke English and competed with one

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Short Story

another to be the one, when she sat down with her grandmother, to interpret; but what a pleasant surprise it was to hear Maya conversing in Tamil with a beautiful accent.

The meeting with Rajan was arranged at "Cinnamon Grand", a fancy hotel, by the uncle. He made the introduction in the restaurant and told Maya to call whenever she was ready to be picked up. Both Rajan and Maya hit it off well: Maya was surprised to see how charming Rajan was; his English was immaculate, his manners exemplary, the way he described different cuisines, mesmerizing. She thought, in that short period, that he was more well-read and well-rounded than she was. He was tall and had chiseled features; his jet black mustache accentuated his tanned skin, he

completely got over her relationship with Rex. Her mother had told her that she had to be serious because it involved families on both sides of the ocean. But she became calm when she heard Maya describing the day trips from Colombo that she was planning to do with Rajan. The Rajan's sisters, on the other hand, reminded him of his getting registered in Srilanka, so that there wouldn't be any delay in processing the immigration. Rajan thought it was silly to talk about marriage at that juncture.

Initially Maya's uncle was reluctant to send her alone on day trips, but when Maya told him that she had toured Europe with her friends before she had joined the college, he couldn't say much. (Her father used to boast about how financially savvy his daughter was with-

from side to side; and the sudden jerky turns threw the passengers against each other. They hit each other's shoulders constantly and had to apologize repeatedly--- an embarrassing situation was slowly turning in to a comical one. The apologies turned in to casual talk; and Maya found out that both men were from California, recently graduated from UCLA. They were traveling in Asia, and Srilanka was their last destination before going back. The one seated next to Maya was Mark and one next to Rajan was Eric.

"Are you guys traveling too? Eric casually posed the question.

"Yes, I am; but he lives here" Maya answered.

"What do you do in California?"

"I've just graduated from USC in fine

disappeared under the majestic mountains shrouded in mist. Eric and Mark would take turns to go to the restaurant car to get short-eats or coffee, and for courtesy's sake they would ask if the couple needed anything, but Rajan and Maya would decline their offers. After a while they couldn't resist their hunger anymore, so they got up and went to the restaurant car. On the way they had their first disagreement: Maya asked him why he told the American men that she was his fiancée. And Rajan told her that it was to protect her reputation; and when she asked what he meant, he told her that an unmarried woman traveling with a man would create scandal in that part of the world. She told him that she didn't care what strangers thought about her and moreover it was his idea to go in the first place. Rajan was upset that Maya argued with him when he did something for her own good. The satiation of hunger made them calm down; Maya, knowing her parents, thought that she could relate to his behavior; she attributed it to his Eastern upbringing, but pleaded with him to understand her point of view, having grown up in a different culture. They stayed in the restaurant car long enough to blow the steam off and felt that they made up before went back to their seats.

The train had reached green carpeted tea plantations; they could see the changing light giving the green fields different shades every few minutes. Rajan got his old charm, was comparing American medical system to the Srilankan with Eric and Mark; and Maya felt bad, she thought she had overreacted. Next time when they all wanted something to drink, Rajan offered to go to the restaurant car. In the meantime Mark and Eric finished uploading the pictures in to their computers and asked Maya to join them in viewing. Mark had put funny captions to the old ones taken earlier on their trip; and he had a funny way of giving a short narrative of the circumstance under which each picture had been taken. This made Maya loosen up a bit and was joking and giggling while sitting close to watch the pictures moving across the screen. She didn't notice that Rajan was standing in the aisle watching her from afar when he came back with coffee for everybody. When Maya told him that he should check out those photos, he pretended that he didn't hear. Later she could see the annoyance on Rajan's face when she and the Californians exchanged emails and promised to swap good pictures of Srilanka when they got down from the train in Kandy.

"You look pensive" Maya asked Rajan.

"No, I was worried about you giving away your email to strangers"

"They seemed good people, I don't think they're capable of mischief"

"What if they turn creepy and start bothering you"

"I'm not going to worry much, and I

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looked agile and athletic, much better than how he appeared on Skype. She could see signs of mutual attraction from the way he was stealing glances. She knew from high school and beyond that she was attractive to the opposite sex: the local white boys always jumped at the chance to take her out on dates. She remembered how Brian cried like a child when she told him that she was leaving for college in California, as if she was leaving the state or the country. Initially they called each other every hour, but when she started her classes and he his job in "Home Depot", their interests got diverted and eventually they lost contact. Rex was her constant boy friend in college, they were inseparable for two years until she found him cheating on her. It had taken a great toll; she remembered the days spent with the psychotherapist in its aftermath. This was the time she rebuilt her close relationship that she once had with her parents. This was the time she became receptive to arranged marriages.

Maya's mother was restless in California, checking the time difference before calling Maya; she couldn't wait to find out how the meeting went. When Maya told it went better than anticipated, she didn't know what to make out of it; Maya told her that it was too early to say anything. Even before she left, Maya couldn't convince her parents that she

out knowing that the whole European trip was paid by a married Italian man, Mario, with whom his daughter had an affair) The day trips to Galle and Ratnapura brought the two closer; and when Rajan suggested a week long travel in the hill country, Maya was excited to take up on the offer. Again the uncle offered a chaperone which made no sense to Maya, but she managed to allay his concerns, and the uncle, on his part, had already consulted Maya's parents and got their okay as well.

The Fort station was buzzing with multitude of passengers: the uncle had the reservation for the first class observation car on the intercity railway to Kandy. When they settled in their seats facing each other, a few seats were empty next to them; they hoped that they would have some space to stretch their legs and some privacy as well. As time went by the seats quickly got filled up around them and just before the train pulled out of the platform, two white men in their twenties, tourists with backpacks, got in and took the seats next to Maya and Rajan. From the beginning Maya had gathered that they must be Americans, but she didn't pay any attention because she was busy talking to Rajan and enjoying the scenery unfolding around her through the picture windows. Contrary to her expectation, the first class train journey was not smooth, the car lurched

arts, ready to jump in to the job market; ---he doesn't have that problem, he has jobs lined up here" she pointed at Rajan.

"What do you do, sir"

"I'm a physician" Rajan felt old when he was addressed "sir".

"How did you guys meet?"

"We just"--Maya started but Rajan jumped in and said that Maya was his fiancée; so Maya couldn't complete her sentence. Maya became crimson and both Eric and Mark noticed and changed the subject.

By this time the scenery had changed from corrugated roofs of the shanties to green paddy fields; the step-like terraces with occasional dwellings in the distance slipped back when the train picked up the steam. They all got accustomed to the movement of the train; and the human contact, having acquainted, became a nonissue. But Rajan did something that caught Maya flat-footed; he suddenly started talking to her in Tamil; he asked her if it was okay to ask them to switch places so that she could sit next to him. When she told him it would look awkward, she could see the change in his demeanor; from that point onwards he had become very quiet, his gregariousness had simply vanished.

Everyone's focus was on the scenery, the train was hugging the sides of the rocky-hills; the steep valley stretched across as far back as one could see and

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know how to block unwanted emails; --- you sound like my mother; she always tells me, "Maya, you trust everybody" in her typical Srilankan accent; ---it's funny that you don't have that accent".

Maya's uncle had arranged the whole trip for them: the limousine was waiting for them at the railway station to take to "Amaya Hills", a luxury hotel, the name a mere coincidence, yet it had thrilled Maya. The car journey wasn't smooth either; winding roads with hairpin bends and at those bends the wheels squeaked and grated on the rough edges, beyond which Maya could see the precipice. Every time the car approached a bend Maya would move closer and closer to Rajan and the driver, out of fear of impropriety, was deadpan in the rearview mirror, despite the human drama unfolding in the backseat. The bends had made Maya oblivious to the beautiful scenery or the hand around her small of the back; when the car finally straightened itself on the straight road, she too pulled herself up away from Rajan.

After having been accustomed to the arid landscape all her life, it was a welcoming change for Maya when she came out to the balcony at "Amaya Hills". The setting sun behind the hills had given the sky a reddish orange tinge to its usual azure; the peaks of the mountains were jutting out from the smoky white clouds; and the verdant land rolled over in all directions. Rajan was standing in the adjoining balcony--when she was basking in that picturesque surroundings--admiring her, while she was admiring the wonders of the nature.

The hotel brochure revealed the secret of why the place was such a magnet for Europeans, when Maya lounged with it in the privacy of her room. In addition to its location and the spectacular views, it had a large swimming pool, a ball room and a night club. When they went down for dinner, a string quartet was serenading the ravenous guests in the elegant dining area. Ironically the menu was designed to satisfy the European palate rather than offering a forage in to the local delicacies, nonetheless the waiter pointed out the exotic choices lurking behind the popular ones, waiting to be coerced by the adventurous. Halfway in to their dinner, they got startled by the loud ring tone of Rajan's cell phone. He quickly looked at it and shut it off; then a few minutes later it rang again and he again shut it off. When it rang the third time he got visibly angry and switched it off completely. Maya was about to ask why he wouldn't answer the phone, but she thought it was none of her business; and Rajan on his part never bothered to offer anything to diffuse the tensed moment.

The next day they covered the usual tourist spots--- the temple of sacred tooth, the botanical gardens, and Embekke temple---every attraction was swarmed with tourists, but the botanical gardens had the presence of unusually

large young locals, mostly in secluded spots in compromising scenarios, probably due to the proximity of the university, reminding Maya of her days as a college student with Rex not too long ago. They walked past them, deliberately not noticing or commenting.

Back at the hotel lobby in the evening, the concierge tracked down Rajan and gave him a bunch of messages. Rajan looked at them briefly and stuffed them in to the pockets and didn't say anything to Maya. Maya was tired, didn't have the energy or the desire to question anything, she wanted to go to the restaurant to have a cup of coffee but she found out that it would open only after seven, so she asked Rajan if they should try the bar. He told her that he would join her in a while; and then hurriedly left for his room, while Maya sauntered toward the bar at the nightclub.

Hurriedly reaching his room, Rajan called his friend Kumar in Colombo to find out why he gave his hotel information to Rukmani. Kumar was not at all apologetic, in fact he was relieved to hear Rajan's angry voice. He told Rajan that he feared for Rukmani's life, he thought she was so desperate and might do something stupid, and he didn't want to be the one to live with the guilt or be blamed for.

Rajan met Rukmani de Silva during his clinical rotations at Colombo hospital; she was a fresh graduate from nursing, impressionable, enamored by the charms of the flowering doctor from Jaffna. She came from a prominent Sinhalese family in Colombo, her father held a higher rank in the Srilankan armed forces, and was politically well connected and respected among the ruling elite. Initially he let her be whimsical about her dalliance with Rajan, a member of the minority, thinking that his only precious daughter knew the decorum and would outgrow her frivolous infatuations when it came to nuptials. But as time passed, he didn't see the change he had expected from her. So he coaxed his sons to intervene with advice and threats; but Rukmani wouldn't relent, she was gung-ho on marrying Rajan and the family was slowly preparing for the more than probable outcome. After all Rukmani, they consoled each other, was going to the USA, hence the adverse publicity wouldn't linger too long.

But the recent rejection for the US entry visa for Rajan had disturbed their cordial relationship: ever since that fateful interview Rajan was not himself. Rukmani could see the drastic changes: they fought more frequently than ever over trivial matters; Rajan was in a perpetual bad mood; nothing she did or said seemed right; he kept talking about their differences, especially their racial difference, that was a nonissue for him despite her family's protest in the past; he started talking to his sisters in US, whom he barely mentioned in his past conversations, more frequently, and the past two weeks were unbearable for her: all her calls were ignored and Rajan wouldn't

tell her his whereabouts. She found his out of the blue conferences all over the country were all lies. She couldn't complain to her brothers now, she had to rely on Rajan's best friend for help.

Rajan realized that he couldn't avoid calling Rukmani, so he reluctantly made the call: they had a heated argument over the phone; Rajan was happy that Maya was not in her room; when Rukmani confronted him with all the lies, he simply said it was over between them and he had no obligation to give explanations; this made her cry uncontrollably and then he tried to pacify her by saying that he was sorry that it turned out that way, but insisted that the breakup was inevitable. Rukmani couldn't stop crying; she reminded him of all the good times they had together and the wedding plans they discussed about, but Rajan could not be swayed and he had no consoling words when she told him that she would rather die than facing her family.



When he came down finally, he visibly looked disturbed, but told Maya that his friend in Colombo was seriously ill and when Maya asked if he had to go, he said it was not necessary. After having had a few cocktails he seemed relaxed and asked Maya how she was killing the time; she told him that she changed her mind and ordered a cocktail instead of coffee, and sooner she emptied the glass a refill appeared from nowhere and she was told that some admirer was paying for them; so she had to locate the person and politely decline. She jokingly said that she could have had as many free drinks as she wanted. She also told him that it was funny that the guy who offered looked exactly like her former boyfriend. Only in the afterthought she realized her slip of the tongue, but to her surprise, Rajan didn't react adversely. When Rajan asked that he wanted to know her past, she decided to open up selectively; she told all the details about Rex and the committed relationship they had, but cleverly dodged the questions, so never had to say a word about all the other flings she had. She even showed him the Rex look-alike on the dance floor,

and was pleased with Rajan's nonchalant attitude.

"So your parents never protested when you dated white boys?"

"We lived in all white neighborhoods, and in high school me and another Indian girl were the only nonwhites, my mother had some problem adjusting to it, but my father was cool"

"Have you ever dated nonwhites?"

"Of course I've dated nonwhites, I've dated Indians, Chinese; my mother was so happy when I dated this Indian kid, who was the son of a doctor in LA; but it didn't work out"

"I hear, due to the different mores, sexual indiscretions are pretty common in the relationships"

"Yes and no, it depends on the person; say for instance, in my case I would consider only if it's meaningful"

"How many you think you had,--- if I may ask"

"Let me think; ---as I said---only Rex,---so I must say one" she lied.

"How about you, you never told me about yourself" Rajan was taken aback, when Maya suddenly posed the same question to him. He regained his composure swiftly and told her that the culture in Srilanka was so different that it wouldn't permit such occurrences, and more over medical studies wouldn't give the time for such activities. Maya wasn't convinced with his explanation especially after the botanical garden experience, but was willing to take his word regardless.

The dance floor came to live when the live band played the Srilankan "Baila" songs; European men with local girls swayed to the music on the floor and the waiters were literally running to fill their liquor glasses. Rajan and Maya felt the buzz after a few drinks. When Rajan had gone to the restroom, the Rex look-alike came back, a little tipsy, and asked Maya whether he could have a dance with her. Maya got really pissed off, but in spite of that he was insistent that he would give her a good time. When she reminded him again that she was with someone; he told her he knew everything

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Short Story

about her nasty breakup and in fact it was her brother's idea that they should get together. When she told him that he wasn't making any sense, he stared at her with disbelief and left without saying anything. Maya was so upset, couldn't wait for Rajan to return.

"Did you tell this guy who kept coming back to me, pestering for a dance, that you are my brother and I'm trying to overcome a bad breakup?"

"Why would I say such a thing,---that guy must be crazy"

"Are you sure?"

"Maya, why would I say that I'm your brother; you yourself told me that he was after you; you know something--- these Europeans will make up anything to lure the local girls"

"But I'm not a local girl"

"Who knows what goes through their mind"

After dinner they went back to Rajan's room and sat in the balcony, enjoying the nice cool breeze blowing from the mountains. The breeze had accentuated the effect of alcohol and Maya was barely able to keep her eyes open. She told Rajan that she wanted to call it a day. When she tried to give a peck on the cheek, Rajan grabbed her head and kissed her on the lips. Maya was stunned by the brazen act, but decided not to make a scene; she quickly gathered herself and said goodnight. Rajan though, not seeing any protest, became bolder, and suggested that they spent the night together. Maya, feeling cheap and disgusted, told him that she had to know the person well before she could have intimacy; she also told him that she wasn't on the pill and it was not wise to take chances. Then she quickly dashed to the door and closed it behind; Rajan rushed behind to stop her but she was quick enough to get away.

While she was in bed, Maya thought about the day: the events had given her the creeps: she was not averse to men kissing her, in fact she preferred bad boys, but in Rajan, she found so many things annoying: the lack of self-confidence, his suspicious nature, the overbearing posture and above all, his miserliness--- conveniently accepting the largess of her uncle didn't look manly to her. She remembered how romantic and generous Mario was during their short tryst, although she was not proud of it now. She said to herself that nothing felt right around Rajan. As she was bemoaning, the sleep engulfed her completely. Then the dreams came swirling around: in the dreams, many of her former boyfriends were floating in the air and she was trying to reach for Rajan's hand in particular, but in spite of her arduous attempts, she miserably failed repeatedly. Then she heard a ringing, it became louder and louder and closer and closer and jolted her out of her sleep. When she got up, the phone was ringing and she realized it was real; she thought it was her mother calling from USA without minding the time difference; but it was a

strange male voice, telling her that he was the one who had asked her for a dance and if it was okay to come to her room for a nightcap. Maya immediately hung up the phone, but the phone again rang and this time she threatened to call the hotel security and the caller hung up. Maya sat on the bed petrified, thinking who could that be; from the accent she knew that it couldn't be the Rex look-alike; it must be somebody local; it didn't sound like Rajan either; she wanted to call Rajan but didn't feel like; so she called the operator and inquired about where the call came from. The operator couldn't give much details but assured that it was an outside call.

Maya, sleepless the whole night, debated whether to call her uncle and stay inside the room until he came to rescue her; but her pride wouldn't allow her to accept defeat, especially after telling him how independent she was, so she mustered her courage to face Rajan. When she came down to the dining area, Rajan was already having his breakfast; he got up and apologized for the behavior the night before; he told her that he had drunk one too many and got carried away from the influence. Maya knew that she had to play her hand well; so she told Rajan that she had no ill feelings, but had to leave immediately for Colombo, because her grandmother was seriously ill. Rajan was upset, but couldn't say no; he had to book the return journey. Seated in the train, she was extremely careful not to give any chance for Rajan to do any hanky-panky. Rajan, after watching Maya, became suspicious; he kept asking what was the nature of her grandmother's sudden illness; and when Maya told him she didn't know the details, he insisted that she should call her uncle; but Maya refused, telling him what's the point when she was on her way. Rajan, before she could even protest, made the call himself. Maya was terrified, seeing the reaction on his face; it was obvious that what ever answer Rajan was receiving from her uncle was not satisfactory.

"So I'm not good enough for you, ah"

"I'm sorry I had to lie,--- after last night I wasn't comfortable;--- so I wanted to go back--- but I was scared how you will react"

"If you want to end the relationship, you tell me straight; don't kill your grandmother for that; I hate people lying"

"I'm sorry, Rajan,--- I hope we can part as friends,--- I'm really sorry"

"Friends, come on; do you think I will drool all over you because you came from the US?; your parents wanted to get you married to a doctor so you can have a better life; especially with your loose morals.....they hid everything from my sisters and tried to tie you on my head"

Maya had never heard that expression "tying someone on someone else's head"; but thought it could be a local lingo. Rajan was furious, his face was red; he was trembling; and Maya feared



that he could strike her any time. She thought it was wise to stay away from him; so she got up and sat next to an older gentlemen and ready to ward off any attacks. She prayed that the train journey should end soon. When the train finally stopped, Maya ran out and got in to her uncle's car without even saying goodbye to Rajan. The uncle knew by now that it didn't work out, but decided not to press for details and agreed with her when she said she should go back to the US as planned.

Maya was sad to say goodbye to her grandma; the rest of the family came to the airport and waited patiently when Maya went through the formalities. They cried when Maya said her final goodbye and that made her cry too; she pulled her hand luggage and kept waving at them while moving slowly forward for a short distance; then she picked up the pace and turned around; and then stumbled on someone in her way. She looked up, prepared to apologize; and was shocked to see Rajan standing in the way.

"What are you doing here?"

"I wanted to apologize for the terrible things I told you that day"

"That's ok;-- don't worry about it;-- It's all forgotten"

"Good, i think we can patch up our difference and work out something for our future"

"I don't think so, Rajan, I'm sorry, we are so different and it won't work out; I'm really sorry; I hope you understand"

"Please give me one more chance"

"I'm sorry, I know in my heart, it's not going to work out, Rajan"

"Please, think rationally; don't throw away something good for both of us: we have the same cultural background, known families; i can become a good provider so you don't have to worry about money; there are so many positives"

"No, Rajan, I respectfully disagree with you; ---same cultural background is not a priority for me; but compatibility is; moreover I don't care about money"

"If you are not serious, you shouldn't have involved me in this, ---giving false hope and wasting my time"

"Rajan, probably you never dated before; this is what we go through in dat-

ing; it's a given that things may go sour; I'm sorry it's so hard on you"

"So I'm not good enough for you"

"Here we go again, Rajan, I think it's best we said goodbye"

"So I'm right, you are crazy about white guys"

"Rajan, I got to go; I can't have this stupid conversation again"

"So it sounds stupid to you, ah; let me tell you;--- you would have slept with that white guy if you were on the pill that day, --- I know I was right from the beginning"

"Oh' i see; my suspicions were right; you are the one trying so hard to see if I would fall for that guy; ---you don't know how sick you are, Rajan"

"Yes, I know everything about you;--- you are a whore, --let me tell you, no decent man will ever marry you and you will remain a whore"

"You know what?--- you are a cheap, despicable, sick bastard, and now get out of my way"

Maya had never been assaulted by anyone before, and it was such a shock when Rajan slapped her on the cheek hard; the tears started coming down like a breached floodgate and she was wimping like a child; when her uncle came rushing after seeing what had happened, there was a brawl between Rajan and him and that brought the security to the scene and both were hand cuffed immediately. While being held, Maya's uncle told her in Tamil that it's best she left the country without getting embroiled in the complicated justice system so she reluctantly proceeded to the gate while keeping her eyes fixed on her uncle, being taken away by the security; tears were forming rivulets on her face, washing the makeup down.

No sooner she found her seat and sat than the flight attendant showed up with a glass of water and a box of napkins and consoled her. That made her cry even more; Maya was self-conscious about other passengers watching her sobbing, so she put her face down on the lap and averted eye contact for a while. When she thought she regained at least some composure, she lifted her head and, to her dismay, she saw Rex look-alike, inching forward in the aisle with bags and backpack. Her heart started beating fast when he approached her seat. They stole glances for a fleeting moment and then he looked straight and walked past her as if she was a total stranger.

The usual announcements were made and the flight was ready for take off; the engine was revved up and then the plane started moving on the runway; the coconut trees were flying back, when Maya looked out through her drying eyes. In a jiffy the turquoise Indian Ocean appeared lapping the edges of the island; and the island itself appeared receding and becoming smaller and smaller and in no time became a speck in the Indian Ocean.

Holy Land Tour



S. Raymond Rajabalan

One Land –Three Religions An experience of a life time

Where exactly is Holy land?

The Holy land referred to as Kingdom of Israel in Judaism is located at the extreme end of the Mediterranean. The term "Holy Land" is also used by Muslims and Christians to refer to the whole area in between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea. It is bounded on the north by Lebanon, on the East by Syria and Jordan on the south by Sinai desert.

Our Tour to the Holy Land

This article attempts to provide detailed information about the significance of the various places the author and his wife recently visited the Holy Land.

Church of All Nations

The Church of All Nations, also known as the Church or Basilica of the Agony, is a Roman Catholic Church located on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, next to the Garden of Gethsemane.

It enshrines a section of bedrock where Jesus is said to have prayed before his arrest. (Mark 14:32-42)

An open altar located in the gardens of the church is used by many Christian denominations including followers who are Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Protestant, Lutheran, Evangelical, Anglican, and any other version of Christianity or Orthodoxy that is



Church of All Nations or Basilica of Agony



Tour Map Of Holy Land



Mosaic inside the Church of Condemnation



The bedrock where Jesus is believed to have prayed.

culturally unique to any particular nation.

The chapel was built between 1919 and 1924 using funds donated from many different countries. The respective coat-of-arms of each donating country are incorporated into the glass of the ceiling, each in a separate, small dome, and also into the interior mosaics.

The countries honoured in this way are; starting from the left side, beginning with the apse: Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico; in the middle of the church are commemorated: Italy, France, Spain and the United Kingdom, and to the right: Belgium, Canada, Germany, and the United States of America. The mosaics in the apses were donated by Ireland, Hungary, and Poland. The crown around the bedrock itself was a

gift of Australia. These multi-national donations give the church its present title as the Church of "All Nations".

The facade of the church is supported by a row of Corinthian columns set below a modern mosaic depicting Jesus Christ as mediator between God and man.

Via Delorosa



The Via Dolorosa (Latin for Way of Grief or Way of Suffering) is a street, in two parts, within the Old City of Jerusalem, held to be the path that Jesus walked, carrying his cross, on the way to his crucifixion.

It is today marked by nine Stations of the Cross; there have been fourteen stations since the late 15th century, with the remaining five stations being inside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The route is a place of Christian pilgrimage.

Church of Condemnation & Flagellation-Jerusalem

The Church of the Flagellation is a Roman Catholic church located in the eastern or old section of Jerusalem, near the Saint Stephen's Gate. Also included in this complex are the Franciscan Monastery of

Holy Land Tour



Church of Condemnation & Flagellation



Mural inside the church of Bethpage

the Flagellation, and the Church of the Condemnation and Imposition of the Cross.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre/ Church of Resurrection

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, also known as the Church of the Resurrection is a church in the Old City of Jerusalem that is the holiest Christian site in the world. It



Stone of Anointing inside the church



Church of the Holy Sepulchre

stands on a site that is believed to encompass Golgotha or Calvary, where Jesus was crucified, and the tomb (sepulcher) where he was buried.

The Catholic Franciscan chapel of the “Condemnation and Imposition of the Cross” is located in their complex at station #2 of Via Dolorosa. According to tradition, this was the site where Jesus took up his cross after being sentenced. It is based on the finding of large Roman pavement stones that may have been part of Pilate’s judgment seat for the condemnation of Jesus, and the place where Jesus took up his cross after being sentenced.

The church is located on the eastern side of Via Dolorosa inside the Franciscan complex, adjacent to the Flagellation church.

Bethpage (House of Fig)

Bethphage was a place in ancient Israel, mentioned as the place from which Jesus sent the disciples to find a donkey and a colt with her upon which he would ride into Jerusalem.

It is believed to have been located on the Mount of Olives, on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho (Gospel of Matthew 21:1; Gospel of Mark 11:1; Gospel of Luke 19:29), and very close to Bethany

It was here that Jesus looked for figs (Mark 11) and finding none he cursed it. In the early season of the fig tree there is an early fig that forms and it is an indicator of the future of that tree’s production. The owner gets the first figs, which are the best and then having knowledge of the late season can plan his market accordingly. In Mark 11 Jesus goes on to cleanse the Temple. The tree and the cleansing are both indications of the fruitlessness of the people of Israel.

Bethpage is located on the Mount of Olives where Jesus requested the disciples to get him the donkey to ride into Jerusalem on what we now celebrate as Palm Sunday. The church here houses a stone that tradition says served as the spot from which Jesus mounted the colt.

The Chapel of the Ascension- Jerusalem



The Chapel of the Ascension in Jerusalem is a Christian and Muslim holy site that is believed to mark the place where Jesus ascended into heaven. The small round church/mosque contains a stone imprinted with the very footprints of Jesus.

Associated with Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem riding a white donkey and hailed as the messiah, (Matthew 21:1-7), the annual Christian Palm Sunday processions begin at this church.

The writer who has extensively contributed a number of articles to Monsoon Journal feels that his recent travel to Israel on a Holy Pilgrimage was a great experience of a life time.



Imprint of Christ's right foot.

Monsoon Journal is pleased to publish a series of articles describing the various places visited by the writer – Managing Editor

To be continued.....

Recent Event



Ninaivukal Celebrates Anniversary & Web Launch

New and customized Ninaivukal Web Launch event was held at Sorkkam on Dec 17th. The event was organized grandly with entertainment that was attended by about 250 guests. They were served with freshly prepared meals by experienced chefs.

Ninaivukal changed its view to accommodate the future growth to access photos and group the photos belong to Organizations or individuals gallery. A small fee based service available to organizations or artists to see all the photos in their own virtual album.

The option allows a capability to directly link

Ninaivukal album to their own website. Any updates reflected in Ninaivukal immediately available to the client web site as well. This blog is introduced to inform users with bit more details about events and upcoming changes about Ninaivukal.

Anyone wish their events to be covered at Ninaivukal, they were requested to book through "Contact" option in advance. Please make sure to inform all of the following information about upcoming events.

Some of the photos from the event can be seen here.

Courtesy: Ninaivukal.com



Guests watching program



Ninaivukal Logo is designed by - Karuna Vincent. This 3D Ninaivukal Logo Model made by Kaamar Thiya



Founder Gana Arumugam addressing



Councilor Logan Kanapathi & Dr. Rajes Logan family with Founder of Ninaivukal - Gana Arumugam



Dance performance in progress



Super Singer popular Sai Esan being interviewed



Dance performance in progress




Meals being served



Guests watching program



Guests at event




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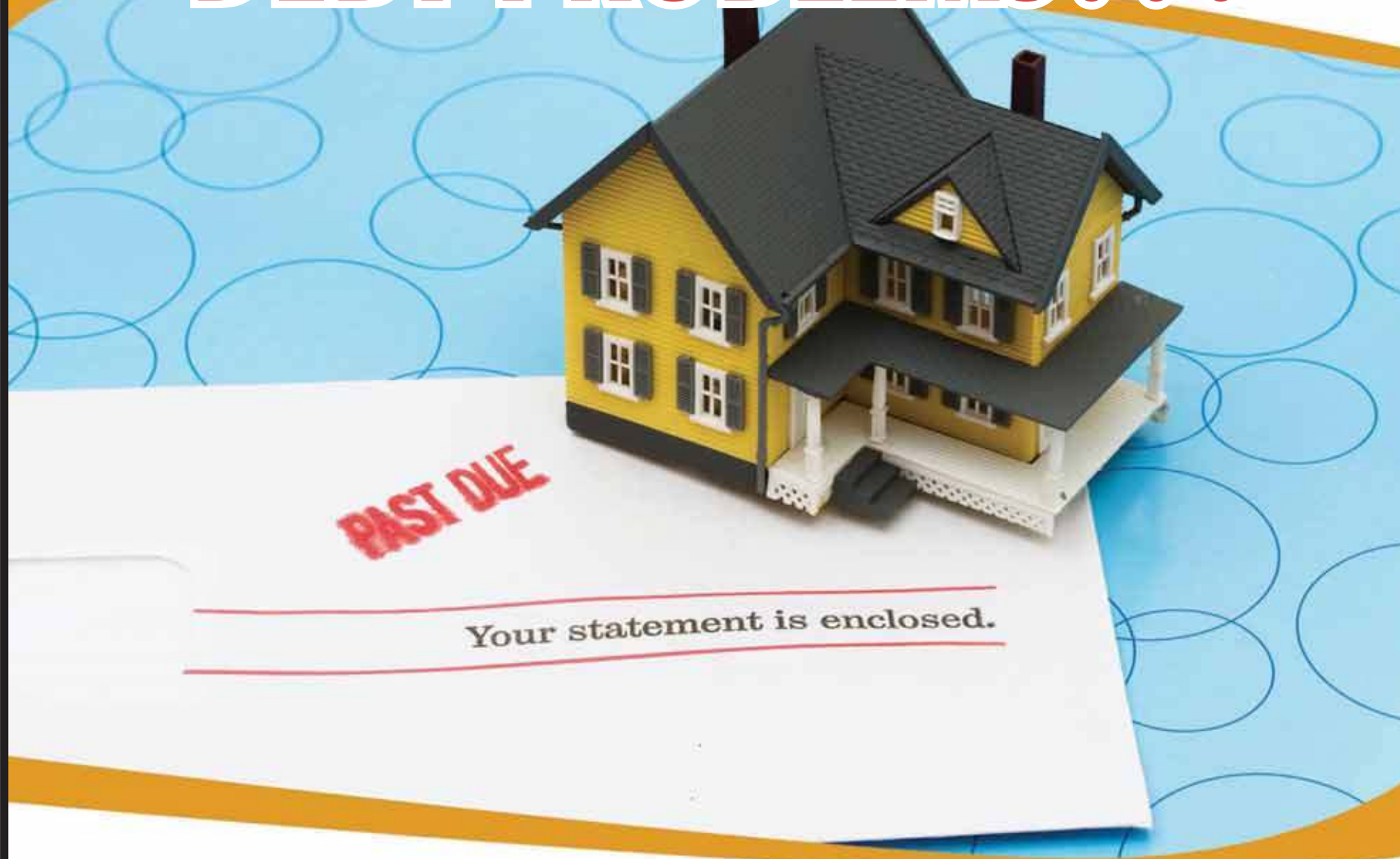
There are only 6,250 tickets being sold, available for purchase in person at The Scarborough Hospital, General campus (3050 Lawrence Ave. E.) and Birchmount campus (3030 Birchmount Rd.). Call 416.431.8130 for details.

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Special Feature

THE WANING MOON



by C. Kamalaharan

I gaze at the waning moon
Through the window of my room
And draw a parallel with my life;
My life too is waning
Since I lost my hubby
And lead a life in solitude
My childrens' life too are on the wane

Due to their strenuous work strain
And not to be a burden on them
I've distant myself from them
To lead an independent life
Till I manage this slender frame
My peers stationed far away
Are in the same boat with me;
Laziness, boredom, fatigue

And rarely visiting friends
Yet, through once in a blue moon call
We share our woes untold
I too was once a full moon
Cool, fresh, and charming,
Happy life with hubby and kids
Alas! everything turned to psey-turvey
Leaving me as a waning moon

Repenting and weeping all alone
Destined to be on bed
His coughing, wheezing, groaning
And the tappings of his walking stick
Were my sole companions
And now no more do I hear them
Since my dear one left me

Epilogue

One reaching the evening of his/her life
Is doomed to become a waning moon
Reading books and engaging in activities
Will dispel feelings of loneliness
And only incessant prayer to the Lord
Will take one to His heavenly abode

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Short Story



Aunty Parvathy's funeral ceremonies were well conducted. Her maiden name was Parvathy Kanapathypillai. After marriage she became Parvathy Rajaratnam. She was well liked by everyone in New Zealand because of her good qualities and manners and hence she was called aunty. Her relations from all over the world attended her funeral.

Her family was well known in Jaffna. Her husband was a Principal in a school in Jaffna and he moved to Australia and worked as a lecturer in a university. Later he got an executive post in a ministry and moved to New Zealand. Four years back he had a heart attack and died in the hospital, where his oldest son was a Cardiologist. He could not prevent his death. His only worry till his death was that he could not see at least one of his three son's wife or children. Aunty

because of our love." Said Nirmala one day and closed our chapter.

After that I disliked everything except the hospital and university.

I am a well known heart Surgeon but born to heartless parents.

My parents were looking for many girls for me to marry but I could not agree on any one. They knew very well, that they were the cause of my not marrying anyone. When they passed away I felt that I missed two people who were living with me. I never felt sorry for missing two good souls.

I am their second son Sivanesan. I am 39 yrs now. I am a Marine Engineer. I am the Chief Engineer of a ship belonging to a company called Conroy Removal Ltd. My parents are not responsible for myself being a bachelor yet. I am responsible for

wonder how many of you know that we carry not only goods, but also sexually transmitted diseases from country to country. All are safe sex but sometimes unfortunate things do happen. We will know the results only when the death doors knock on you.

Why should a girl who was well looked after by her parents, marry a New Zealand Engineer and get a dreadful disease later in her life? Why should she be lying on a bed and show her genitals to a doctor? More than this she is going to have a baby.. She is going to undergo treatment without knowing how she got this disease. This is terrible .So I decided not to get married.

I know my parents were worried

want be getting any more photos.

--- -- -----

I am the third in the row, Sivachchelvan. I am qualified in computer technology and passed out as a Pilot, as per the wish of my parents.

When I was young, I was attracted by the pilot in blue or black dress pulling a travelling bag followed by attractive airhostesses. But as I grew older, I was interested in fighting jets. To follow that field of study it will cost you lots of money. But my father said not to worry and I proceeded to America to study in that field.

My mother used to call me daily to inquire whether I had bath, meals etc. Even though I pointed out about the cost

ORIGINAL IN TAMIL by Aki (N. Zld)
ENGLISH VERSION BY THURAIYO O RAN

MATURED PALMYRAHS

Parvathy too had the same worry.

On the eighth day ceremony, many items Parvathy aunty liked were prepared and offered. That time a talkative relation of her's told, "Get three girls from the road and ask them to stand in front of the offerings so that Parvathy aunty's soul may depart in peace".

I am the oldest son Surgeon Sivaruban. I am 46 years old now. All our relations are accusing all three of us, as the cause, for our parents not seeing their grandchildren and Daughters in law. I do not know about my younger brothers reason for not marrying. I don't interfere in their personal matters. Further more it is not fair for me, to advise them to marry, when I am not married.

My parents knew very well, why I did not marry because they are the cause for it. When Nirmala entered the university, she was 22 and I was 26. One day I brought her home. My parents also liked her much. But on inquiring her village and their relations, they did not like her. I never expected my parents to act like 18th century people in this 21 st century. I was very adamant in giving her up. My father was moving with lawyers and MPs and hence had a criminal mind. He contacted Nirmala's parents and asked them "Are you trying you level best to come up in the caste status?". These harsh words by my father did damage Nirmala's family. Nirmala kept away from me. I apologised many times and tried to contact her.

"Sivaruban, I don't like our caste to stand on the way and I don't want to sacrifice my parents, who brought me up,



in Jaffna – by indi.ca

it.

For seamen who spend months and days inside a ship and in the engine room, sea shore and the girls we meet there, are the heaven. The country in which we anchor is the place of our first night. Until there is poverty and prostitution in all the five continents, we the moneyed Seamen, will have no scarcity for bodily pleasures.

Since I am used to this life, the girls my parents proposed to me looked innocent and I felt sorry for them. I looked at them as sex objects. Even after marrying one of them, I am going to share a bed with an Italian or an African girl. After marriage we can't fall within the walls of chastity and one for one parameters. I

about this till their death. I never divulged my reasons for not marrying, to them. My mother was spending money on astrologers and brokers from Canada, Australia, England and Srilanka. We were getting photos of girls with sarees ,surithars ,Punjabis and what not, in parks and in posh homes.

Every time my mother used to look at their photos and said she is going to be my future Goddess of wealth. I usually look at them with sympathy and refused to marry them.

My mother used to say "you don't know the value of Tamil girls". I told to myself, I will look for them when the ship goes to Malaysia, Singapore, India or Colombo. Now that mother is no more I

of telephone calls, she never bothered since my older brother was living with them. Further more my second brother was ordered to talk to me on wireless, irrespective of which part of the globe he is travelling. My mother used to wake me up everyday and then she went to bed. When it is 10.30 P.M. in New Zealand it will be 6.30 in the morning in New York.

My parents and my bothers came to New York for my convocation. Our uncle and aunty with their only daughter Syami, also came to New York from California. After the convocation, uncle's family gave us dinner in a five star hotel. It was more or less a confirmation of my marriage to Syami. But no one spoke about it directly. My mother was telling



Short Story

me to have a closer look at her. She was also looking at me very closely. My uncle told me that she will be completing her Attorney's course in two years. In other words I have to wait for two more years for the marriage.

Next year the Iraq war commenced. I was a pilot of one of the bombers. So it was fireworks on the sky daily. Waiting for orders, flying over cities and deserts, bombing the ordered targets was the routine. I was not worried of the results of the bombings and the ensuing politics. Bombing and trying to escape oncoming rockets was real fun.

All the fighters which left in the evening, may not have returned to the base in the morning. No one inquired about it. Not to inquire was the Army rule. After the capture of Saddam our team returned to America. I returned to New Zealand on a three months vacation.

While I was on vacation, the human tortures of the army in Iraq started coming out in bits and pieces. I was perturbed and worried about them. I felt guilty in being a part of the war. Hence I met a psychiatrist. He prescribed me some tablets. They were able to minimize my trembling of the hands. But it did not heal my heart palpitation and the uncontrollable anger over my mother, who paid undue attention to me. This was not disclosed to my father since he will get worried.

At the end of the vacation, I returned to America unwillingly. My uncle and Syami were at the airport to receive me. They told me that I looked tired and lost the former enthusiasm. I thought that the pills may be the cause. I told this to my flight Lieutenant. He told me to work in the computer field in which I was trained. I accepted my new position gladly.

Our next project was Srilankan war. Pictures of Wannai district of Srilanka, taken from a height of 500 meters were appearing on my computer. You could see a small tractor and a big armored vehicle going through a lane. Our work is to calculate at which speed the plane should fly and at which speed to drop the bomb, taking into consideration the geographical position and the speed at which the wind is blowing. We were unable to get the information as to where these are coming from and where they are sent. All the mails were received with our platoon IDs and sent back to the same IDs. I did not like this and hence started to take more pills. If I quit this job another guy will come in. Hence I decided not to quit this job. I knew very well that innocent people are going to get killed. The war started.

Can't I safeguard at least a few of our people? I asked this to myself. Hence I willingly calculated one out of a ten erroneously. One day one of the bombs

dropped fell on an army camp. I was arrested and put in an army jail. They were inquiring as to my connection with the Tigers. I categorically denied any connection with them and continued to say that it was done on a humanitarian basis. During the investigation my depression increased and was admitted to an army hospital. I don't remember anything afterwards. Medication and needles were administered. These increased my weight and appearance. Later I came to understand that these

medications caused the sexual dysfunctions of a person gradually. So I wrote a letter to my mother and requested that Syami should marry someone else.

I was not allowed to speak to my mother on the phone, but allowed to write letters and the replies were translated into English and given to me after the jailors went through them. At the end of the war and my punishment, I returned to New Zealand.

My world was computer, emails and TV. I was happy to have lost the job.

Otherwise I would have been an innocent cause for many atrocities committed by the army. This would have caused my slow death. But I was satisfied that I looked after my mother very well before her death. But the only grief was that none of us got married as per our parents wish. I know that marriage is not possible for me in the future. When Syami attended my mother's funeral, she was wearing a thali (chain) and had a big abdomen.

I locked my room and cried aloud.

BOOK REVIEW

MUKANGAL (FACES)

This is an anthology of 50 short stories in Tamil, collected, edited and published by V. Jeevakumaran of Srilankan origin, presently residing in Denmark. He himself is a writer of short stories, novels and actively involved in Tamil literary activities. He has received many awards and prizes for his novels and some short stories. He should be congratulated in embarking on this venture of bringing out this volume of Srilankan Tamil writers (mostly) living in the nook and corners of the world. I think this volume is a first of its kind. He made use of the modern technology to reach out to all the writers in 18 countries and got it printed at Chennai. His expertise in computer technology was made full use of in this remarkable venture. He may have sent invitation to many writers around the globe and was successful in getting the cooperation of 50, which is really an achievement. He has brought out a very attractive and commendable volume of short stories of good standard. This anthology of 50 stories, 552 pages with an attractive cover jacket and 10pts font size, with spaces between lines and paragraphs, facilitate easy and enjoyable reading. Special mention must be made of the attractive drawings appropriate to the story, found at the beginning of each story and the lay out done with artistic acumen. The artist Siva Kauthaman and the book designer Ival Barathi deserves honourable mention. This is a welcome volume in the midst of commercial books coming out from Chennai with small fonts and congested words filled pages which, make it difficult to read and enjoy.

I suppose Jeevakumaran was able to cover the cost of printing this volume by the contributions from the writers, who participated in this venture. They too deserve praise for their cooperation and timely help. Another noteworthy feature is that Jeevakumaran is distributing most of the copies of this book to libraries and selected schools in the North and East of Srilanka free of charge. This idea and expert execution



Remembrance Day Ceremony in Ottawa, Nov 11, 2011

of this plan, clearly reflects the munificent mind of Jeevakumaran and he should be highly commended. Also he has sent 5 copies of this book to each of the contributing writers thereby easily distributing 250 copies to the nook and corners of the globe without much difficulty. At this juncture, I should point out the difficulties faced by Tamil writers to market their books to various countries as we don't have a printing and distribution net work. It is high time that we all must think of this seriously and sought the help of Jeevakumaran to organise one soon.

I was able to read only a few of the stories in this anthology and found them very interesting, with varied themes, depicting the ups and downs of immigrant lives in varied situations and surroundings. The prolonged civil war in Srilanka, which ended abruptly in 2009 had its good and bad consequences. Many Tamils left their motherland in desperation and found solace in various countries. Some of them received them with open arms and some with contempt and trepidation. Out of all those countries Canada deserves special mention for its hospitality. Not only refugees were received with open arms, but also they were given all basic facilities and monthly stipend to start a new life in a

new environment. Every year nearly around one hundred thousand refugees, were able to enjoy the hospitality of Canada for over a quarter century and still does. Thereby Canada improved its economic status and attained Global recognition for its humanitarian services to refugees. Now we have nearly three hundred thousand Tamils living throughout Canada. We must be grateful to Canada and must be good, law abiding citizens of this country.

The highest number of writers are from Canada (10), followed by Australia and Germany (5 each) and from Denmark (4), followed by Srilanka, UK, India and Singapore (4 each). I would like to request the writers to pay more attention to Tamil grammar, when describing an event. The dialogues can be in spoken language to make it more realistic, but the descriptions must conform to grammatical norms, as these are permanent records to be preserved for generations.

I have decided to write the English version of these stories in MOSOON JOURNAL and the first one appears in this issue. Thanks for the support rendered by the Publisher Mr. Logan Velumailum.

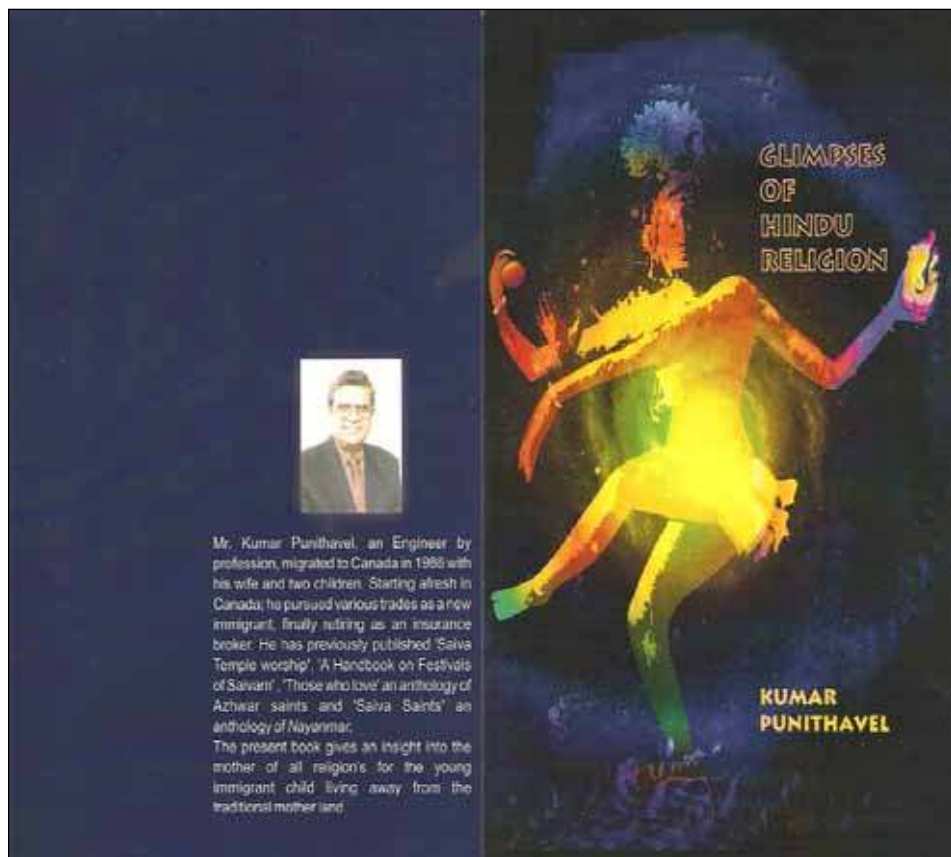
THURAIYURAAN.

Special Feature



BOOK REVIEWS

Kumar Punithavel's Glimpses of Hindu Religion



By Siva Sivapragasam

The expatriate Tamil community in different countries around the world is living with a genuine fear and anxiety that the second generation and more so the third generation will ultimately be absorbed into the main stream culture and their identity to their own culture and religion will gradually fade away.

It is against such a background that author Kumar Punithavel's Book Hindu religion gives hope to win over this challenge. The book is primarily designed for the average layman and specially to the younger generation to understand and get to know the various customs and traditions of Hinduism.

As the author remarks in his foreword, the book is written in simple English which can easily be understood even by a child ten years old. The author has conveniently divided the book into three parts. The beginning of the book introduces an overall picture of the Hindu religion to the reader and the latter chapters are devoted to questions and answers to enlighten the reader on other aspects of Hinduism. The final section of the book describes the more popular reli-

gious events, the variety of festivals of the Hindus, feasts and fasts which are observed throughout the year. Many of us perform Hindu rites without knowing the actual meanings of these traditions. "Glimpses of Hindu Religion" delves into these rituals and provides the reader what he may not know.

The author has written the book in English as this is the language of the second and third Tamil generation to come. As the book is in the English language even those who belong to other cultures could also read and understand the traditions and rituals of Hinduism. The book is well illustrated with pictures and drawings.

Author Kumar Punithavel has attempted to create a simple handbook which will assist parents among the Tamil Diaspora to make known to their children the ancient and rich heritage of Hinduism and encourage the coming generation to learn and follow the traditions and customs handed down for generations.

The book "Glimpses of Hindu Religion" becomes a must in every Hindu home.

Rice & Curry

- Sri Lankan Home Cooking

By S.H. Fernando Jnr.

By Siva Sivapragasam

Thousands of Sri Lankans who have migrated to several countries world-wide have accustomed themselves to continental food style & European cuisine. Yet, a traditional Sri Lankan rice & curry meal is what they long-for and enjoy it still whatever part of the world they live in.

S.H. Fernando's Book on Sri Lankan cooking titled Rice & Curry – Sri Lankan Home Cooking and published by Hippocrene Books is a full recipe book on the traditional Sri Lankan meals. Sri Lankan cuisine is basically centred around the utilization of the natural bounty around them – the seeds, nuts, fruits, roots, leaves and bark of plants and trees. "Rice & Curry" is an introduction to a great culinary tradition about which much is not known. Author Fernando takes the reader on an unforgettable culinary journey through the Sri Lankan recipes which are easy to follow. The Book depicts a rich culture and cuisine and takes the reader to one of the best culinary secrets of our time.

The key to successful cooking of Sri Lankan dishes is the proper selection of ingredients and of course the correct proportions of the curry powders and spices that go into it's blending and mixing. Author Fernando has very correctly guided the reader towards this in his meticulous selection of the recipes followed by their preparation, selection of ingredients and the proportions. The author has provided a variety of recipes of traditional Sri Lankan cuisine including the mouth-watering Jaffna Kool (Soup) and



Rasavalli (King Yam) Pudding.

The book also includes an introduction to Sri Lanka's history, culture and cuisine: a detailed travel section for visitors; a comprehensive spice guide and stunning color photos throughout the book. The recipes in the book have been selected to serve both Non-vegetarian and vegetarian lovers of food.

Fernando's book "Rice and Curry" will certainly serve as a guide for happy cooking and good eating. The author S.H.Fernando is a second generation Sri-Lankan American and a graduate of Harvard University and the Columbia University School of Journalism. He resides in Baltimore.

The Publishers of "Rice & Curry" are Hippocrene Books and the book can be purchased online by visiting www.hippocrenebooks.com

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Durham Tamil Association

Ajax, Pickering M.P. Chris Alexander Special Guest at Durham Tamil Association Kids Christmas Party

Chris Alexander, Ajax/Pickering Member of Parliament was the special Guest of Honour this year at the Durham Tamil Association Kids Christmas Party held on 12th. December.

Speaking to the guests Mr. Alexander praised the activities of the Durham Tamil Association and stated that his support will always be there for the organization.

Commenting on the political climate in Sri Lanka he remarked that Sri Lanka should adequately address the allegations of human rights violations relating to the final stages of the war that took place. He stated that unless this is done it will be difficult for Canada to attend

the next Commonwealth Conference proposed to be held in Sri Lanka.

Mr. Alexander spent considerable time mingling with the members of DTA, joking with the children and encouraging them at the games they were playing.

The Christmas Party for the kids is an annual event organized by the Durham Tamil Association and this year's event recorded a high turn out with nearly 100 kids and a good number of youths participating in the event. It was a fun filled evening during which kids watched a movie, played games, participated in numerous craft activities and also received a gift from Santa himself.



An Evening with MP Chris Alexander



On December 19, 2011, several members of Durham Tamil Association attended MP Chris Alexander's Xmas Open House at his Constituency Office in Ajax. During the event, DTA's President Josh Suresh thanked Mr. Alexander for the Government's strong stance against Human Right lapses in Sri Lanka.

Tamil Cultural & Academic Society of Durham



Believe in You 2011

As many of you are aware "Believe in You" is TCASD's major festival, which has been celebrated over the last few years. It is also a cultural & educational talent show done by a few of the youths in Durham region. This event has been held at J. Clarke Richardson on Sunday, October 2, 2011. This amazing festival consisted of many performances such as dramas and plays, music and dances that were choreographed by the youth and guided by adults. These outstanding performances were witnessed by over 500 people. The "Believe in You" festival brought an exciting evening for the Youth, parents and the audience. This

year over 150 participants took their talents to the stage; this includes teenagers, children and, even toddlers that joined the entertainment. Some highlights of the show includes semi classical Bhrathanatyam, Hip-Hop, and a play to end it all off. All in all, it was a spectacular festival that put the Durham region on the cultural diversity map. The experience was not complete without a true taste of Tamil cultural food and Pizza. We had many dignitaries come to our annual Believe in You festival. Specifically Hon. MP Chris Alexander, MPP Joe Dickson, Councillor Joann Dies, Councillor Renwick Ashby, Mayor Dave

Ryan, Councillor David Pickles, Jonny Conte president of Italian Club, Roland Rutland, Jenny Ding Chinese Canadian Culture Centre, Shashi Bhatia and Councillor Peter Rodriguez. This event also was a partnership by multi-cultural communities in Durham region, such as Italian community, Chinese community, Caribbean community, Baha'i community and Indian community. These kinds of activities made TCASD as one of the leading grass roots organization promoting cultural and educational activities in Durham region. All the parents, youth and the community leaders are amazed with the outcome and look forward to the

next year.

Special thanks go to the TVI, CMR and Monsoon Journal and Ajax Snap for the Media coverage and our special guests. The youth of TCASD, would also like to extend their gratitude to the 2011 Executive team and their parents for giving them this amazing opportunity. With that said, thank you for all who had contributed in one way or the other to make this day a huge success

Reported by:
Tanesha Thirukumar





Tamil Cultural & Academic Society of Durham

FESTIVE PREPARATIONS

The Tamil Cultural Academic Society of Durham Festive Preparations workshop was held at the Ajax Public Library on December 03rd, 2011. This was a partnership event with Ajax Public Library. This program is designed to engage women in many activities. Empowering Women within community. This event coordinated by Jeya and Sutha.

We would like to thank our Demonstrators:

Lange Loganathan demonstrated Pongal and Croissant appetizer

Melody Asby demonstrated Christmas decoration such as garland, bows and door bells

Dharani SriRaj demonstrated creativeness with fruits and vegetable

Vatsala Nathan demonstrated garlands designs.

Thanks to Ajax Public Library for their partnership.

Tcasd Women's Wing has engaged the women in several educational workshops such as this one. Women were excited and participated very actively in the program. The feedback was excellent and the participants are looking forward to the Next event.

TCASD's women wing appreciates the entire participant and the supporters. It was a very successful event. **By: Sutha Thirukumar**



Business



Managing Your Money

For retirement freedom - commit to saving

**David Joseph,
M.A. (Economics)**

The freedom to make your retirement dreams a reality – wouldn't that be wonderful? You can do it. All it takes is money and that's why saving throughout your life is important. But with the everyday reality of utility bills, mortgage payments, car loans or lease payments and the many other demands on your hard earned money, creating an investment portfolio and regularly contributing to it can seem like an impossible task – and there go your retirement dreams.

But it doesn't have to be that way, when you PAC for your retirement starting now. A PAC – or Pre-Authorized Contribution program -- is a simple, straightforward and consistent way to make an affordable monthly payment to your investment plan, the same way you would for any of your other monthly commitments. It's easy to do – just arrange with your bank to deduct a specified amount from your savings or chequing account on a regular basis and contribute it to your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA) or non-registered portfolio.

Investing small amounts makes it easier to contribute. Ten percent of your earned income each month is recommended but you could also choose to invest weekly, bi-weekly, or quarterly. Here's what you would gain from PAC-ing \$250 into your RRSP every month:

- At a compound annual rate of 8 per cent you'll have \$354,230 of pre-tax assets after thirty years.¹
- If you wait until the end of each year and invest a lump sum of \$3,000, you'll have only \$339,850.
- So, by PAC-ing each month, you add potentially \$14,380 to your retirement fund without costing you one additional penny!

What happens if you don't PAC or come up with a lump sum \$3,000 to invest each year? You'll short-change your retirement fund by more than \$300,000! That's why you should start PAC-ing right away. You'll not only benefit from the advantages of dollar cost averaging and the magic of compounding, your regular PAC contributions will also generate a tax benefit along with the tax-deferred growth in your registered portfolio.

By taking advantage of a PAC monthly investment plan, you could be taking the fastest route to financial independ-



ence and retirement freedom. Your professional advisor can help you pick the PAC that works best for you.

¹The rate of return is used only to illustrate the effects of the compound growth rate and is not intended to reflect future values or returns on investment.

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, nor is it intended to provide investment advice.

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News from Waterloo

Christmas celebrations, unites a community

KITCHENER: The Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region celebrated Christmas on the 10th of December at the KW Counselling Hall, Kitchener. This was held according to the practice instituted by the association to conduct commemorative events to celebrate festivals of its members.

Addressing the gathering, President Indra Logendran 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. She further said that, with the multi-ethnic nature of Canadian society, Sri Lankans and Indians belonging to the different religions need to feel that the association is a place where all these religions are respected and people belonging to various denominations are welcome. "The

membership of the association comes from great religions such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam to reflect the unified approach taken by the association to bring harmony".

Dharini Sivakumar, the Secretary in her open address welcomed the large presence of members and volunteers. She highlighted her speech in thanking the parents of the students of the Waterloo region Tamil language class and their teacher Mrs. Kunamalar for presenting their first ever Tamil Nativity drama program and Carol service. Concluding the message she wished the gathering a merry Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

The event ended up with games, dinner and the arrival of Santa Claus. Close to 150 members attended this year-end event.



Operation Christmas Child – A vital lesson

CAMBRIDGE - Shoe boxes coloured in crayon were stacked like Christmas trees in the foyer of the Pinebush warehouse on Thursday December 08th.

Stuffed with holiday goodies, the boxes are the only gift many children in developing countries will receive this Christmas.

"A lot of these kids can't go to school if they don't have school supplies or clothes. You can help a kid get an education and have a semi-normal life," said Kathy Mizen, regional collection co-ordinator of Operation Christmas Child.

Candy, crayons, hair brushes, toothpaste and calculators will be sent to kids in developing countries as part of the program. Eighty-two million boxes have been distributed since the program's inception in 1993, said Mizen.

Mizen said that in 2008 she travelled to Uruguay and was able to hand out a box she packed to a 10 year-old girl.

"She was shy at first but then her face lights up as she starts taking things out and she realizes that everything in the box is just for her. It wasn't stuff that she had to share with her family," said Mizen.

Mizen said that each year the program goes to different developing coun-

tries.

In the Waterloo region, Cambridge is the main collection center for sorting and packing for the boxes in Ontario. Mizen said this year she expects 8,000 boxes to be donated, the most since 2003. Boxes collected in Ontario are sent to South America and Central America.

The Canadian goal is to donate 750,000 boxes this year.

Dharini Sivakumar, the secretary at Tamil Cultural Association of Waterloo Region, said members have been donating their time and energy for the past 12 years to give back their service to the community. Our members go in as a group or individually during various volunteer hours.

"Kids don't really have a good understanding of how fortunate we are," said Indra Logendran, the President of the association. "So if I can touch their lives by bringing light to this, it makes me feel better and them feel better in the end."

Anjali Abraham and Bavithra Naguleswaran, Grade 10 students, said they enjoyed packing box with a stuffed animal, crayons and candy because kids in other countries don't get Christmas presents like they do.



Business



Arun Senathirajah

ACIB, MBA (Banking Mgmt)

The Euro Launch

The 'snake in the tunnel' exchange rate mechanism was the first attempt at European monetary cooperation in the 1970s towards forming a single currency in Europe. It was essentially pegging all the European Economic Community (EEC) currencies to one another. European Currency Unit (ECU) was established subsequent to the break-up of the Bretton Woods system. The euro thus became the successor to the European Currency Unit (ECU) forming

euro currency issues).

Impact of Debt Crisis on European Financial System

EU leaders took longer to agree the latest measures to restore confidence in the euro. All rescue actions were too little, and too late even one comes out today. Engulfed Debt Crisis of the PIIGS countries (Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain) has made investors in sovereign issues to avoid Euro area sovereign bonds. European Banks which mainly lent to these countries now face repayment risks and that has led them to meet new capital adequacy requirements. If the Euro collapses, many

sure that a lot of that debt gets paid back. Otherwise, their banks are insolvent and they're in a financial crisis. Rather than to safeguard the PIIGS countries, Germany and France the large economic bloc of the region are acting in the mess for their own self-interest too. This has been portrayed by the assumption was that the euro could never break up, and thus everyone in it was as safe. However, European Central Bank acted as the 'lender of last resort.' It bought many European government bonds as the system needs it to buy in order to keep bond yields stable. This is what the Federal Reserve did during the 2008 financial cri-

what had been seen before.

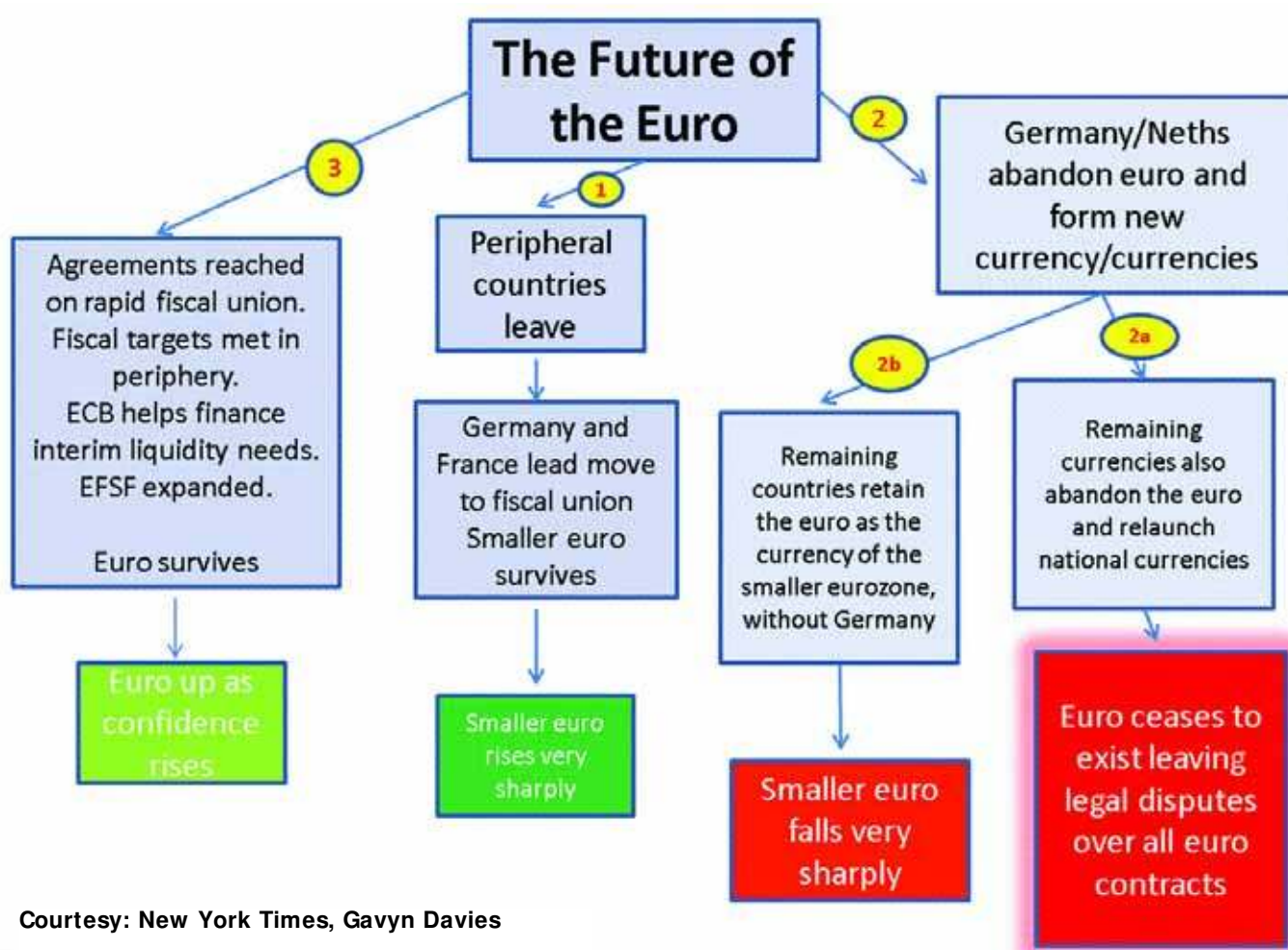
Germany Gained; Eurocurrency Caused the Debt Crisis, not Vice Versa

Floyd Norris states in New York Times that 'German competitiveness against the rest of the world was probably helped by the fact that the debt problem didn't cause the euro crisis. The euro caused the debt crisis.' Export earnings of the south European countries were undermined by the appreciating euro, while that gained advantage to the German economy. So the debt loaded relatively poor performance of other members of the euro zone held down the appreciation of the euro against other currencies. But whoever is at fault, the bottom line is that the euro is in deep, deep trouble'. An independent analyst writes 'south European countries could not harvest the real gains of the euro appreciations, so that they could not service the debts they borrowed. South European countries were also not competitive in the world trade business and deprived of their right to devalue their currency since they no more hold their own currency. The euro caused a huge jobs and capital suction into Germany. Angela Merkel Chancellor of Germany and European Central Bank President Jean-Claude Trichet interpretation of the euro crisis, which is the simplistic belief that the crisis was totally caused by the over-indebtedness of the Southern Europeans. The Germans conveniently neglect the harvest of gains their economy has had in the past decade at the expense of the periphery countries and that exhaust their ability to forge a sensible solution to the crisis. A writer in 'Progressiveinmadison' asserts 'German leaders stand is that Greece crisis created euro crisis. But, without the euro there would have been no debt crisis in Greece'

Stand of the UK

The UK has always seen the EC as an institution in which you try to secure your "national interest" (means German interests) rather than a place where you make political compromises with partner countries. The inability to move beyond the perceived short-term "national interest", at the expense of what is better for the Euro bloc has been a key reason for the EU's powerlessness to respond adequately to the challenges it faces. The UK government has recently directed embassies across Europe saying, "Prepare for riots in euro collapse, Foreign Office has warned." British embassies in the Eurozone have been told to draw up plans to help British expats through the collapse of the single currency. The EU itself would not survive such a shock intact either. The British relationship to the union has to be resolved by a referendum sooner or later. A mixture of disappointment and outright anger could also tempt other countries to reassess their membership, sending the EU into a process of disintegration, which would spell further economic and political disaster. It is not too

Debt Crisis and Impending Collapse of Euro



Courtesy: New York Times, Gavyn Davies

a single currency. Beginning on January 01, 1999, all bonds and other forms of government debt by Eurozone nations were denominated in euros. New currency notes and coins were introduced on January 01, 2002. So, a decade old currency now faces threat of its continued existence. (Issues of July 2010 and Sept 2011 of this journal have extensively covered on European Debt Crisis and the

European banks that hold Euro-denominated bonds will lose significant value. The banks will then be pushed to seek government help or restrict their lending to consumers. The Eurozone crisis has spread from the peripheral countries to the core Germany and France. Debt load of Greece was lent by German and French banks. Germany's and France's interest in this whole mess is to make

sis. But the fact is this cannot be continued forever, that's what has reflected on the euro currency. The bank crisis will translate into a severe catastrophe just as the U.S. financial crisis of 2008 created a severe recession in 2009. If the financial system fails that would bring severe Europe-wide recession. Economists expect the Recession, may bring more suffering and last longer than



Business

late to change course, but the window of opportunity is closing very fast. A European analyst says, 'If we continue down the current path, the 2012 will not be "national interest" but rather "return of nationalism". We are on a slippery slope and EU leaders would see the long-term consequences of their actions.' Other countries which linked to the euro currency are already in the process of making contingency plans to mitigate the impact of the euro collapse. China and US etc. are also preparing contingency plans.

Impact on the USA

European and American economies' fates have become increasingly intertwined. The European Union represents a bigger economy even than the United States. If the euro crashes and euro-holding banks fail, the pain will cross the Atlantic, as the pain of the U.S. crash of 2008 crossed the Atlantic in the opposite direction. European financial institutions may lose the ability to repay U.S. creditors, inflicting more losses on an already traumatized U.S. financial system. Collectively, the Eurozone countries are far and away the largest foreign investor in the United States. If, the



Courtesy: The Telegraph

years ago the Kaiser Chiefs famously sang 'I Predict A Riot'. If we continue on current trends, Henning Meyer of Guardian UK writes 'I predict more than one riot for 2012. One of this year's novelties, stemming from junctures such as the Arab spring, the ascendancy of the Occupy movement and the massive protests against economic policies in Spain and Greece, was the rise of new social movements and the widespread use of communication technologies to coordinate civil unrest., Civil unrest is set to continue and grow next year.'

The Eurozone crisis is at the heart of global economic uncertainties and their potentially devastating social consequences. Therefore, what the EU does

looks much more likely. If EU leaders continue to pursue their misguided policies, forcing crisis countries into depression-level GDP reductions and even higher unemployment, the whole situation will unravel sooner rather than later. Under these circumstances there is no chance to improve national debt levels so social costs will raise and defaults and forced exits from the Eurozone become much more likely. The already weak European banking sector would not be able to withstand the shock of several countries leaving the euro.

IMF Warning

'No country is immune from an "escalating" euro zone crisis and each one must act to head off the risk of a global depression', the head of the International Monetary Fund Christine Lagarde said on Thursday December 15, 2011.

She speaking at the U.S. State Department said the outlook for the world economy is "quite gloomy" and warned that failure to act collectively could lead to protectionism and isolation reminiscent of the 1930s depression. "There is no economy in the world, whether low-income countries, emerging markets, middle-income countries or

euro zone states and are hoping non-European countries will also step in with loans provided through the global lender to help. The IMF is currently in talks with member countries on providing additional resources to the Fund.

From Lagarde speech pulling emerging markets, other developing and poor countries into the scene and showing and throwing Eurozone crisis mess on the shoulder of these countries is a calculated attempt to dampen the economic strength of the countries like China and India by calling them also to contribute to the bailout funds initiated by the IMF to pay the gains enjoyed by the German and French states at the cost of PIIGS nations. Europeans created Eurocurrency not Indians or Chinese. It is Europeans who have to pay the price to fix it.

Euro Collapse – The Way Out

The Euro is the problem more than the debt. It just cannot withstand even moderate shock. So far, the ECB has been hesitant of its serious intervention on the future state of the Euro. If the euro cracks up, each country in Europe will be forced to (re)create a new currency of its own. In such a world, German bonds would probably rise in value, while French bonds would probably fall quite sharply. As the markets become more anxious that the euro may fail, they exert pressures that help rip the euro apart.

Europe's options now basically reduce to two: Either dismantles the euro to restore each individual government with its own individual currency accepting a horrific recession along the way. Other option is to build a single new pan-European government to control the new pan-European currency with considerable inflation risk along the way. Austerity packages already demanded from the crisis countries are in reality intervention on the political autonomy of these affected countries. Are the Eurozone countries expecting a super-hero fiscal body – a unified government for the Europe? It is impractical to create a new agreement, a so-called fiscal union in which there are strict controls on the deficits individual countries can run and real enforcement mechanisms that can be used to punish countries that don't abide by the rules. There are serious questions about the euro. Will they save the Euro or not? The collapse is inevitable. The only question is when will it collapse? Some weaker prospective views are: Another option is that some of the weak euro zone countries, like Greece and Portugal, leave. Or maybe some of the strong countries, like France and Germany, form a super euro. Or May be the whole thing collapses. New York Times, Gavyn Davies depicts the future options of the euro.

The original purpose of the International Monetary Fund was to ease monetary shocks. The IMF needs to involve itself actively, otherwise could be a financial and economic catastrophe of global impact.



Courtesy: FrumForum

Eurozone economies slump American economy will see significant reduction in inflow of capital from the Europe.

As a single economy, the EU is America's largest trading partner. If it buys less, American exporters will also suffer. This misfortune could erupt almost at any time. The crisis may thrust the U.S. economy back into recession in 2012.

Europe - More Unrest Anticipated

Unless political leaders of the EC seriously commit to unselfish actions, what lay ahead are more and more social commotions and unrest what have already seen in Greece and Italy? A few

next year to resolve the Eurozone crisis will be of global significance. The individual measures needed to resolve the crisis have been widely discussed and are well known. But unless EU leaders completely change course and overcome political and legal obstacles to install the European Central Bank as a lender of last resort, draw up plans for a real fiscal union, introduce Eurobonds, devise a strategy for new growth, pursue necessary structural reforms in surplus as well as deficit countries and finally reform the financial sector, there is little hope the current malaise can be overcome. Unfortunately, the miserable scenario

super-advanced economies that will be immune to the crisis that we see not only unfolding but escalating," Lagarde cautioned. "It is not a crisis that will be resolved by one group of countries taking action. It is going to be hopefully resolved by all countries, all regions, all categories of countries actually taking action." "It is really that Gordian Knot that needs to be cracked, that needs to be addressed as collectively as possible, starting with those at the center but with the support of the international community probably channelled through the IMF," she said. European leaders last week agreed to lend up to 200 billion euros (US\$259.95 billion) to the IMF to help struggling

Children's Corner



SHORT STORY

By Chandrani Warnasuriya

It was a cold and wintry morning. Not much sun beamed through the window pane, making the living room even more gloomy and cold. The children guessed it could be freezing outside. Alvin and Michelle had been indoors for nearly a week, watching TV and doing computer games and putting puzzle pieces together from time to time. They were bored and now they longed to go outside.

The children had watched snowflakes falling outside the day before and

chiding him for teasing his sister.

The children then together rolled and rolled the snow, packing and piling it up. They went pound! Pound! Pound! Giggling and laughing and enjoying their new found adventure. They rolled the snow big and round.

"That goes to make the bottom of our man," cried Rosey. "Let's roll a second ball of snow," she said.

So the children rolled and rolled a second ball of snow as they laughed and cheered watching it grow.

"Let's plop it on the ball below," said Rosey. "That goes to make the middle of

our man," she said happy and full of cheer at the thought her imagination was working good.

"Let's roll another cried Alvin."

"Make it round but a little smaller." Cried Rosey "Wow! Now, let's place it on top and make sure it won't fall." She said anxiously. "That goes to make the top of our man," she exclaimed, quite jubilant at the thought of her creation. "Then they all cried out quite cheerfully, "We did it!, We did it!"

"What shall we call it?" asked Alvin.

"Snowman. Of course." Replied Rosey

"What shall we put for the eyes?"

questioned Michelle.

At the thought of it Rosey ran into her house and fetched some buttons from her doll house and fixed them for the eyes.

:"What about a nose for the Snowman?" asked Alvin.

"I'll get something," said Michelle as she ran in the house and got a carrot from her mom and gently pushed it below the eyes of the Snowman.

"This is great. I've got the hat already." Said Rosey. "Let's place it high up on the head." She said, and placed it on the little snowball herself.

"Hooray, hooray! We now have a won-

Frosty the Snowman

– A Winter Story

thought they were not going to have much luck this day. Still, Alvin not easily swayed by bad weather peeked out the door. He was delighted, for outside it was a clear frosty morning and snow had piled up high and the ground was covered with a blanket of snow.

Yo ho! Yo ho! This is perfect, Alvin smiled. He called out to his sister Michelle, "let's go outside and play in the snow, get your coat, scarf and gloves and with our boots on we will be warm and we can make snow balls and play."

"Mom can we go outside for a little while to play?" Michelle asked her mom.

"Yes, but not for long," said Michelle's mom, "and make sure you are bundled up well for the cold." She said.

"Okay mom, we will soon be back, not to worry," said Michelle as she put on her coat and ran out to meet Alvin in their front yard.

Soon they were rolling snowballs on the ground, when Rosey and Geoffrey their next door neighbors joined them. Rosey carried a hat she had curiously picked up lying on the snow a little away from their house.

"Let's make a man with our snowballs." Cried Rosey

"What kind of a man can you make with snow?" said Geoffrey, making fun of his sister.

"We can name it after we've made it." Replied Rosey.

"You always come out with funny ideas," said Geoffrey.

"It's not funny, this is absolute fun," said Michelle, getting closer to Rosey and



derful snowman," they all cried, happy at their creation.

"How shall we name it? Let's give our snowman a cheerful name," suggested Alvin.

"Frosty, would be ideal," cried Rosey, happy and excited at the success of her imagination.

The children danced and sang round the snowman with glee. Daily they came round to watch their snowman, adding something new to it everyday. Rosy brought her bright red scarf and wrapped it round its neck. Alvin and Geoffrey placed sticks for the hand and fur branches around to make a winter scene.

Days passed as the children came daily to dance and enjoy round Frosty the snowman. Frosty too enjoyed the children. He was glad that even in nature's cold and bleak times, children will always have something to cheer them up, making Frosty and playing and happy with him, forgetting the bitterness of a cold wintry weather.

One sunny morning when the children as usual came to watch their beautiful snowman, they found Frosty's head missing. It had gone away. The sun kept beating down. The snowy ground gradually turning green and the snow melting away. They could do nothing to save their Frosty.

As they looked around for their precious Frosty they caught sight of a note left behind hanging on a fur. "I'll be back next winter, so cheer up, Bye!" Your beloved, Frosty.



Recent Event

Silver Bells Dinner Dance

To celebrate the spirit of Christmas, a dinner dance was held on Saturday, Dec 17th with music by Sampath and the Showcase at Panemonte Banquet Hall. The main sponsors for the event were Cash Point and Able Accident Benefits.

The dinner dance event was organized very grandly by the organizing committee and especially the credit goes to Elanko, Sampath, Roshan and staff at Cash Point.

There were lots of music, fabulous dinner and many prizes at the dinner dance event. The first prize, a return ticket to Sri Lanka, sponsored by VMS Travels won by a lucky winner. Some of the photos taken at the event can be seen here.



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