

JAFFNA SCIENCE ASSOCIATION யாழ்ப்பாண விஞ்ஞான சங்கம்

JSA

NEWSLETTER செய்தி இதழ்

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Editorial

The Newsletter of the Jaffna Science Association (JSA) Vol: 6(1) was released nearly five months ago and now Vol: 6(2) is in your hand.

Although this Newsletter was scheduled to be released nearly two months ago, we couldn't achieve this target due to various activities that kept us busy in the University. This again indicates the need for outside involvement in the JSA administration and activities.

We have been trying our level best to initiate JSA activities outside the University by organising exhibition contests, quiz contests, essay competitions, seminars etc. in various schools. However, public participation is very little. Therefore the question arises: What can be done to increase the public involvement in JSA activities?

One of the ways that can be approached easily is in our hands at present. This year the theme of the year has been selected as "Changing Ecology - Challenges and Solutions". This readily provides a common platform to work together with the public.

Our region is facing many environmental threats that have been neglected for many years due to the on going war. Therefore we must start our work from the bottom. Human Ecology has to be built on the life-style of our people. People must feel the social responsibility towards nature, other human beings, animals and the whole ecosystem. Earlier this responsibility which ensured a balance ecosystem was built around the socio-religious ethos of our people. That ethos is being lost under the pressure of modernity, rapid population growth, and the adverse conditions of war in our region. An ethos needs to be rebuilt. It is the scientific process within which the social responsibility has to be brought.

(Continued in page-3)

NEWSLETTER RELEASE

The JSA - Newsletter Vol.6(1) was released at a ceremonial function by Prof.P.Balasundrampillai, Present, JSA on September 13, 1999. The first copy was handed over to Prof. (Ms.)R. Mageswaran.

In this function Prof. K. Balasubramaniam delivered the felicitation address and Prof. C. Sivagnanasundram gave a brief talk on "Importance of Communication".

Nearly 325 copies were printed and distributed free of cost to all the life members, foreign diplomatic missions, all schools in Jaffna and the other Universities in Sri Lanka.

JSA - LIBRARY

It is high time that JSA should have its own office and a library. The present executive committee is trying hard to obtain a land and office building. In this process Rs. 200,000/- has been obtained from the Government for purchasing office equipment.

At this juncture it is important to realise the need of preserving the publications of the JSA as a treasure for the future generation. Therefore, we are requesting the members to send at least **two copies** of their publications whether it is a book, reports, or hand outs in whatever format, to the Chief Editor, JSA. Kindly endorse that the copy is donated to JSA library.

-Chief Editor-

JSA - THEME FOR THE YEAR

**"CHANGING ECOLOGY -
CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS"**

Short letters in response to the Newsletter are also welcome

-Chief Editor-

SCHOOL SCIENCE PROGRAMME

Proposed Activities

* Quiz Contest

The written test for Quiz Contest will be held on January 21, 2000 at four centers namely Jaffna Central College, Chavakachcheri Hindu College, Nelliady M.M.V and Chunnakam Ramanathan College. One hundred and twenty five students from various schools in Jaffna District will participate in this contest and among them 10 students will be selected for oral quiz contest.

* Exhibition Contest, Oratorical Contest and Oral Quiz Contest.

Exhibition, Oratorical and Oral Quiz Contest will be held during January 29-30, 2000 at Jaffna Central College. The detail programme will be sent to the schools separately and appear in the local newspaper soon. All schools in Jaffna and the people of Jaffna are requested to use this rare opportunity and see the exhibits in this contest in which 13 schools are participating, and to encourage the students.

Accomplished Activities

- The **Essay Competition** was held on October 29, 1999 at four centers namely Jaffna Central College, Chavakachcheri Hindu College, Nelliady M.M.V and Manipay Hindu College. One hundred and seventeen (117) students from various schools in Jaffna District participated in this competition. The names of the winners will be announced soon and the prizes will be awarded to the winners at the JSA - annual sessions - 2000. ■

JSA - ANNUAL SESSIONS - 2000

The 8th Annual Sessions of the JSA and Annual General Meeting are scheduled to be held during April 5-7, 2000. All the members of JSA are requested to reserve these dates for their participation.

JSA - NEWSLETTER

Editorial Staff

Dr. N. Sivayogan (Sec.A)-Chief Editor

Mr. K. Kesavan (Sec.B)

Ms. M. Sivarajah (Sec.C)

Prof. N. Gnanakumaran (Sec.D)

The Jaffna Science Association Newsletter will be published quarterly. All material should be sent to the Chief Editor, JSA through the sectional editors. Deadline for next issue is **March 18, 2000**. The JSA editorial staff reserves the right to accept, reject or edit all material submitted for publication.

Newsletters are available to all members free of charge. It can be distributed to non-members provided they send the request with a self addressed 22cm x 9cm size envelop with stamps Rs. 3.50

The JSA is a scholarly, non-political, and non-profit professional association. Membership is normally open to persons having a Bachelor's degree. However, persons who have made valuable contributions to the science could also be considered for membership by the Executive Committee.

(Continued from page-1)

At each level of the educational process primary, secondary and tertiary - social responsibility and environmental components must be included. Also continuous training programmes should be evolved for community leaders, politicians, businessmen, industrialists, teachers, lawyers and all others outside the school, who are involved in decision making and public opinion formation. This could be done using available resource personalities, mass media and modern information technology.

Will the JSA members come forward to initiate this task and lead our people to a better environment friendly life? ■

JSA - LIFE MEMBERS

In order to update the names of the life members, a list of all the life members has been included in this Newsletter. These names have been taken from the records available with the General Secretary. If any name has been inadvertently missed, please bring it to the notice of the General Secretary immediately. Also if your name or title has been changed, bring that also to the notice of the General Secretary - JSA.

-Chief Editor-

NEW PUBLICATION

Learning Research

(A guide to medical students, junior doctors and related professionals)

Prof.C.Sivagnanasundram

(Emeritus Professor and Past President of JSA)

The book is targeted at the young researcher who is led in a stepwise manner over the various stages of a research project. In his foreword Dr. C.D. Uragoda Co-editor of the Ceylon Medical Journal has commended it highly as a useful book for the younger researchers.

It is a book which no person who wishes to learn research methodology can afford to miss.

Pages: 206

Price: Rs.190.00

(Students Rs.150.00)

JSA - THEME FOR THE YEAR

**"Changing Ecology-
Challenges and Solutions"**

Activities.

Dr. Soosai Anandan, Department of Geography, University of Jaffna, is undertaking a survey of ponds in Jaffna with a view of restoring them.

SECTIONAL NEWS

Section A

Chairman's Message

The Section A of the Jaffna Association wishes all its members a happy and prosperous New Year.

The Year 2000 is just another year for a Scientist but for the common man it is the beginning of a New Century and a New Millennium. Every person in the society is looking forward to enjoying their life in a better way than in the past with the innovations of the technological world. In fact today we are living in the age information technology. Now the world is nothing but a multi-dimensional space in which all its dimensional features could be scanned in a matter of few minutes. The roots of these technological advancements are scientific discoveries. Without scientific discoveries there cannot be any advancement in technology. In this situation to plan out and enjoy life in a meaningful fashion every person in the society must have some level of awareness about scientific discoveries and motivation to learn more about science. The Section A is committed to steer the public towards science awareness and create an atmosphere to learn science, in particular among the young generation, through popularisation of Science.

In order to achieve this goal, in the past we have conducted monthly seminars and organised workshops for school teachers. The section also planned to conduct regional seminars in each educational zone with the aim of taking science to the door-step of the young generation. But the response from schools for this was not encouraging. In the future Section A is planning to publish a quarterly booklet inviting young academics in the University and leading science teachers in the schools to contribute to this booklet with the aim of popularising Science. Section A has always extended its full co-operation to the parent association in

spreading science by programmes like exhibitions, essay and quiz competitions.

Finally I wish all the members of Section A, a productive future and request their full co-operation to strengthen the activities of Section A.

Prof.K.Kandasamy
Chairman-Section A



Accomplished Activities

- Mr. K.S. Kugathan, President, Field Work Centre, Thodaimannaru delivered a talk on "Some Recent Observations of Regional Environmental Affections", on August 31, 1999. This was the first seminar organised on the Theme of the Year.

In his talk Mr. Kugathan stressed on the following: Environmental consciousness, Importance of conservation and Balance of nature. Indiscriminate destruction of the mangrove vegetation, Ecological relics in the Peninsula, Indiscriminate use of pesticides and insecticides and how it has affected the local populations of natural controllers of pests and insects, especially birds, spiders, scorpions and centipedes, Profuse littering with plastic and polythene products that cannot be recycled, especially shopping bags and juice containers, Importance of corals in the protection of the shore line and how it is being removed, Human construction activity and its impact on the environment, especially the roads from Eluthumadduval to Nagarkovil, Changes in the population ranges of animals and how it leads to speciation on the one hand and creation of inter-species on the other.

- Ms. Namagal Krishnapillai, Lecturer, Department of Botany delivered a talk on "Low Temperature Storage of Mangoes", on September 21, 1999. In her talk, she discussed the importance of mangoes in human life, Maturity Indices, harvesting methods, storage life and

quality of mangoes. She stressed the effectiveness of low temperature storage on extending storage life of mangoes without affecting the quality.

- Mr.S.K.Cyril, Refinery Division, Ceylon Petroleum Corporation, Kelaniya gave a talk on "Petroleum Crude Oil and its Products", on September 23, 1999. He discussed the principle of petroleum refining, different uses of petroleum products and the factors that determine the cost of petroleum products. He highlighted that the actual cost of the petrol is the same as that of kerosene, but due to heavy taxation, the selling price of petrol is about five times the price of kerosene. ■

Section B

Accomplished Activities

Chairman's Message

The Section - B of J.S.A. involves the applied sciences. Therefore we have the privilege of including wide range of disciplines.

The expansion of knowledge in different fields has led to the modification of the G.C.E. (A/L) syllabus and our children are facing a big vacuum in acquiring the current knowledge. Hence the Section - B has decided to publish a quarterly hand out for the G.C.E. O/L and A/L students to get some knowledge in current developments related to applied science. The first issue was released and the second one is under preparation to be published by the end of January, 2000. The issue named 'Pirayoga Vingnana Sudar' includes articles related to computer and information technology, agriculture, biotechnology, molecular biology etc.

Section - B is also working towards the theme for the year, 'Changing Ecology - Challenges and Solutions'. As a part of this Section - B is working on the control of pests and diseases in horticultural crops in

the Jaffna peninsula, specially mangoes and jak fruits. The committee members are meeting the NGO'S and the Research Station officers at Thirunelvely to get economical and educational assistance. In addition, the help of the staff members at the Agriculture Faculty is also sought.

I wish that the Section - B members would get together and work hard to achieve the goals and strengthen the activities of the J.S.A.

Prof. (Ms) V. Arasaratnam
Chairman - Section B ■

Accomplished Activities

- First issue of the proposed pamphlet "Prayoga Vingnana Sudar" was published and released in September, 1999. The pamphlet contained many useful articles and current news in biotechnology, information technology, and clean technology to promote the knowledge of school students. Nearly 350 pamphlets have been sold out in the schools in the Jaffna peninsula at a cost Rs: 20/= per copy.
- Mr. G. Mikunthan, Head, Department of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture delivered a talk on "Integrated Chilli Thrips Management", on December 07, 1999. In his talk, he discussed each stage of the life cycle of chilli thrips, their effect on chilli plants and about the biological and chemical control methods for chilli thrips. His talk was very useful to the farmers and agricultural officers in our region. ■

Section C

Chairman's Message

We have entered a New Year, a New Century and a New Millennium! First of all I wish you all a happy, healthy and hopeful New Year.

The Section C (Medical Sciences) of the JSA is concerned more with health than disease. In fact, Health Sciences, is a more appropriate term for this section. Our outlook is community based and our activities are multi-disciplinary, contributing to physical, mental, social and spiritual well being of man and society.

The WHO slogan with the aim, **Health for All by the year 2000**, has not been fulfilled. Let it now target a more realistic year, 2025 or so. Jaffna and other war torn areas have been thrust with more problems than the rest of the country. The JSA has a part to play in the rehabilitation and building up process in our areas, by way of providing supportive information and guidance. We should also spread our umbrella to cover the younger generation in schools, who need a scientific orientation when young.

In the past year, we have had programmes for senior students in schools, those in the O/L and A/L classes. Our aim was to create awareness and motivate them to be interested in the study of Human Biology and Social Sciences, using the scientific methods of learning. In this respect, it is our desire that graduate teachers of sciences and biology become members of the various sections of the JSA. With their help we could widen our activities in schools in the future.

We also invite the members of the medical profession to join Section C of the JSA. We are aware of the contribution made by the Jaffna Medical Association (JMA) to clinical medicine. I would like to inform our colleagues in the JMA, that the JSA offers wide opportunities, for discussions, as well as presentation and publication of health related subjects. Medical personnel in Jaffna have a unique opportunity to participate in both associations.

We are hopeful that the JSA and in particular Section C draws more members in the coming year.

Prof.C.Sivagnanasundram
Chairman - Section C

Proposed Activities

* Public Seminars

Dr. N. Sivarajah, Head, Department of Community Medicine will hold lecture/demonstration on **"Use of overhead Projector in Teaching"** in various faculties during February, 2000.

Ms. S. Ambikaipakan, Head, Department of Anatomy will conduct lecture/demonstration on **"Learning of the Human Body"** at J/Hindu College, J/Vembady Girls High School and J/St. Johns College. during February, 2000.

Dr.(Ms) S. Pancharajah, Lecturer, Department of Siddha Medicine will deliver lecture on **"Food and Nutrition according to Siddha-Ayurvedic Concept"** at Chavakachcheri, Nallur and Jaffna (2centers) during the next two months.

Accomplished Activities

- Mr.S.Anurakumaran and Mr.A. Kenneth, 4th year students, Medical Faculty, U/J gave talks on **"How to Learn Hygiene"** on September 24, 1999 for G.C.E. (O/L) students and teachers at J/Thavadi Hindu Tamil Mixed School.
- Mr.K. Bharathan and Mr.V.Puvaraj, 4th year students, Medical Faculty, U/J also gave talks on the above topic on December 02, 1999 at J/Ariyalai Sriparvathy Vidyasalai.
- Mr.P. Pratheepan and Ms V.Kayalvily, 4th year students, Medical Faculty, U/J also gave talks on the above topic on January 07, 2000 at Senguntha Hindu College, Thirunelvely.

These talks were based on the textbooks used by the students and motivated them to learn hygiene by appropriate learning methods. ■

JAFFNA SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

List of Life Members -JSA

Section A

1. Dr. K. Chitravadivelu
2. Ms. N. Selvarajah
3. Prof. G.F. Rajendram
4. Prof. V.K. Ganesalingam
5. Mr. P. Mahinan
6. Mr. S. Yogarajah
7. Prof. (Ms.) R. Mageswaran
8. Dr. (Ms.) K. Somasundaram
9. Dr. N. Sivapalan
10. Ms. L.P. Deva
11. Mr. K. Jeyasingam
12. Dr. (Ms.) S. Sathiyabalan
13. Ms. K. Ponnampalam
14. Mr. V. sarveswaran
15. Mr. T. Sothyrujan
16. Mr. S. Tharmalingam
17. Ms. R. Muhunthan
18. Prof. K. Kandasamy
19. Prof. R. Kumaravadivel
20. Mr. K. Selvavinayagam
21. Dr. S. Srisatkumarajah
22. Mr. M. Muraleetharan
23. Mr. K. Pathmanathan
24. Mr. T. Thayaparan
25. Mr. P. Ainkaran
26. Ms. T. Kathiravetpillai
27. Prof. K. Theivendirarajah
28. Dr. C. Santiapillai
29. Ms. V. Jegatheeswaran
30. Mr. R. Jegatheeswaran
31. Mr. A.C. Thavaranjit
32. Mr. S. Srikathirkamanathan
33. Ms. R. Pararajasingam
34. Dr. M. Skandarajah
35. Ms. M. Senthilkumaran
36. Mr. K. S. Kugathanan
37. Dr. (Ms.) S. Saminathan
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39. Dr. P. Vinobaba
40. Ms. N. Ravimannan
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43. Mr. K. Parameswaran
44. Mr. R. Sriharan
45. Mr. R. Prabakaran
46. Mr. W. Venkatesh
47. Mr. M. Jude Tagore

48. Ms. I. Sivananda
49. Ms. N. Krishnapillai
50. Ms. C. Rajendram
51. Dr. N. Sivayogan
52. Ms. R. Gnaneswaran
53. Ms. V. Perinpanathan
54. Mr. S. N. Surendran
55. Ms. N. Ratnasabapathy
56. Ms. J. Nandakumar
57. Mr. P. Ravirajan
58. Mr. K. Sutharsan
59. Mr. R. Pushpanathan
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61. Mr. N. Maheswaran
62. Ms. T. Balachandran
63. Mr. S. Lachumanan
64. Ms. S. Silogini
65. Ms. P. Vichneswary
66. Ms. M. Nalini
67. Mr. K. Arulraj
68. Mr. T. Manoranjan
69. Mr. T. Eswaramohan

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5. Mr. V. Kandasamy
6. Prof. (Ms.) V. Arasaratnam
7. Dr. S. Mahesan
8. Mr. S. Kanagasabai
9. Mr. A. Senthuran
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11. Mr. W. S. Tambirajah
12. Ms. S. Srirajan
13. Mr. R. Vijeyaratnam
14. Mr. P. Alvapillai
15. Ms. V. Kulaveerasingam
16. Dr. N. Ethirveerasingam
17. Mr. P. Prabakaran
18. Mr. P. Umaharan
19. Dr. L. Jeyanathan
20. Dr. A. Navaratnarajah
21. Mr. S. Kannan
22. Mr. V. Sivakumar
23. Mr. R. Prabamugunthan
24. Mr. R. Sritharan
25. Mr. S. Thirumaran
26. Mr. C. Elankumaran
27. Mr. K. Kesavan
28. Mr. K. Thaboathan

29. Ms. S.Srinivasan
30. Ms.M.Jeyanathan
31. Mr.T.Sivaroooban
32. Ms. S.Jeyaseelan
33. Ms.R.Sutharsan
34. Dr.(Ms.) K.Kulasingam
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36. Mr.S.Balakumar
37. Ms.S.Senthilkumaran
38. Mr.G.Mikunthan
39. Ms.T.Mikunthan
40. Ms.K.Chandrasekar
41. Ms.K.Maniccam
42. Prof.K.Balasubramaniam
43. Ms.V.Senthuran
44. Rev.Anthony Ariyaratnam Paul
45. Ms. N.Gnanavelrajah
46. Mr.S.Uthayathas

Section C

1. Dr.K.Sivapalan
2. Dr.M.K.Muruganandan
3. Prof.S.V.Parameswaran
4. Dr.R.S.Navaratnam
5. Dr.S.P.Seermaran
6. Dr.R.Theivendran
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12. Dr.R.Rajendraprasad
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14. Dr.N.Sriskantharajah
15. Dr.V.Kunanandam
16. Ms.M.Sivarajah
17. Dr.(Ms.)S.Sivapalan
18. Dr.P.Navaratnam
19. Dr.G.Gunarajasingam
20. Mr.S.Sivananthan
21. Mr.S.Thevathasan
22. Ms. M.C.Srikanthan
23. Ms. S.Pancharajah
24. Ms. K.Sabaratham

Section D

1. Prof.N.Balakrishnan
2. Prof.R.Sivachandran
3. Mr.V.P.Sivanathan
4. Mr.R.Nanthakumaran
5. Prof.K.Sinnathamby
6. Dr.S.K.S.Nathan
7. Prof. N.Gnanakumaran
8. Dr.S.K.Sittrampalam
9. Mr.M.Sinnathamby
10. Dr.N.Shanmugalingan
11. Prof.A.Shanmugadas
12. Prof.P.Balasundarampillai
13. Rev.Dr.A.J.V.Chandrakanthan
14. Mr.S.T.B.Rajeswaran
15. Mr.K.Rajendram
16. Dr.A.S.Soosai
17. Mr.M.Nadarajasundaram
18. Ms. S.Arulanantham
19. Ms. K.Neelambikai
20. Mr. T.Kalamani
21. Mr.K.Thevarajah
22. Ms. N.Shanmugam
23. Mr.M.Jeyendran
24. Mr.T.Velnampy
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26. Mr.K.Sivarajah
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29. Ms.N. Selvanayagam
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31. Mr.K.Gnaneswaran
32. Mr.S.Sivarajasingam
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39. Mr.V.Eswaran
40. Ms. T.Krishnan
41. Ms. T. Raveendran
42. Mr.R. Vijayakumar

Section D

Chairman's message

The choice of 'Changing Ecology - Challenges and Solutions' as the theme of the year by the JSA is timely, and needs the support from all quarters to venture in effective activities in relation to the theme. This is more specifically very fitting to the Jaffna District at the moment.

Two of the several related problems need concerted attention of all living in this part of the country. These are aspects related to the vegetation and drainage situation in the district.

Most of the Natural Vegetation has been raped by disasters pertaining to the war situation in the district. Tall Palmyrah plants, highly bearing Coconut trees and other worthy trees, many of which are over fifty to sixty years old, are all gone. But no effort has been taken to any appreciable level by any quarters for either replanting or for preservation of the remaining vegetation. This situation leads to several problems - less rain, low fertility of the soil, shortage of valuable timber used for construction purposes, and the like.

Drainage is another serious problem we face at present. This in turn creates two severe setbacks. One is, the wastage of rain water during the rainy season - the rain water simply runs into the sea. The other is, the accumulation of rain water, more than necessary, in certain spots, thereby causing harm to crops as well as being a sanctuary for mosquito breeding. The bunds constructed for military purpose, the uncleared debris of damaged houses and other buildings block the natural flow of rain water, thereby making it to stagnate in unwanted and unplanned places. Next, it is a long time since most of the ponds and canals leading to them were cleared and/or deepened, either because of prohibition in the area, or for fear of landmines being concealed in the area.

Several years back, a lot of good and worthwhile activities were carried out in this part of the country through peoples' voluntary participation- the shramadanas. Planting of new trees and maintaining them, clearing and deepening of drains, canals and ponds were two of the activities which were attended to through Shramadana Campaigns.

Can't we think of these again with the dawn of the Millennium?

Prof. K. Sinnathamby
Chairman - Section D

Accomplished Activities

- Prof. R. Sivachandran, Head, Department of Geography gave a talk on "Seed Politics" on November 17, 1999. He traced briefly the emergence of the problem faced by agriculturists of the third world countries, of being 'dependent' on Western countries for seeds for the cultivation of paddy, vegetable and other cash crops. Pure variety seeds are now preserved in countries like America, by Multi-national Institutes which bag heavy profits on sale of new varieties, all of which are either seedless or produce infertile seeds. Prof. Sivachandran further pointed out that the "Native Pure Variety Seeds" which were solely the possession of the third world countries are fast dwindling and the developed countries are claiming "Royalty" to some of these. Finally, he warned the third world countries of this dangerous "Seed Politics", and to take stern and immediate action to preserve our treasure.

Do you have any questions in Science?
Share with others! Experts' opinion will be sought and published in this Newsletter

-Chief Editor-

SCIENCE NEWS

AIDS

Genetic studies confirm that the roots of the AIDS virus, which attacks people, can be traced to viruses infecting chimpanzees living in west-central Africa.

Folic Acid and Pregnancy

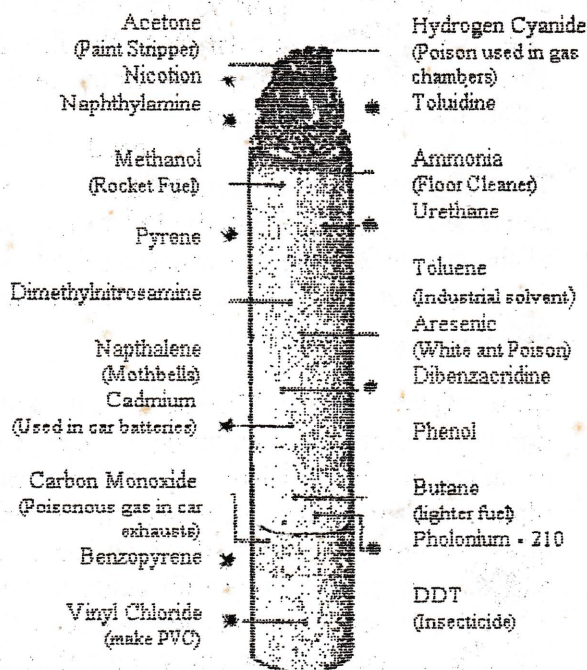
It is customary in Sri Lanka for pregnant mothers to attend clinics after the fourth month of pregnancy. Iron, Folic acid, Vitamins and Calcium tablets are issued free in these clinics at this time. It has been shown that folic acid deficiency is associated with congenital malformations.

However recent studies have shown that issuing folic acid tablets at 4th month and later would not prevent certain congenital malformations, as organ formations begin to take place in the first and second months of intra uterine life itself:- the defects in the closure of the neural tube resulting in meningocoele, meningo encephalocoele etc. at birth, is associated with folic acid deficiency.

Hence what is important is for women in marriageable age group or those who plan to have children should take folic acid in plenty before being pregnant. Folic acid is available in green leaves.

What's Your Poison?

Tobacco smoke contains about 4000 chemicals. The principle components are nicotine, carbon monoxide, tar, nitrites, ammonia, hydrogen cyanide and other hydrocarbons. These substances can be inhaled by smokers and 'passively' by non smokers in the same local environment.



* Known cancer causing substances

Source : Birth Research News Vol.3(4), 1998

Next copy Deadline: March 24, 2000
Please include all your programme up to April 04, 2000.

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JSA-NEWSLETTER

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To:

Chief Editor
Jaffna Science Association
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