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RATHNADEEPA

UNITED SRI LANKA ASSOCIATION
(AKL BRANCH) INC.

Committee 2007

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සමරමු 60 වෙනි නිදහස් දින උළෙල!



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RATHNADEEPA

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.....

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Ayu Bowan

It's a pleasure and privilege to reach our regular readers of "Rathnadeepa" bi-monthly newsletter of USLA-Auckland branch-it's first issue for the year 2008.

Since the last issue of our news bulletin we have organised two major calendar events. The first one was the senior citizens trip which took place on the 12th of January to Waitomo caves, Piripiri caves, and other places of interest that had natural settings. Over 40 people participated in this trip and some of them have written to thank USLA. Everyone joined in singing the songs of yesteryear and the senior citizens were happy that they were able to have fun. The snacks were available in plenty. This reminded me of my school days when I enjoyed those school trips.

Our next big project which we just completed successfully on the 09th of February was Sri Lanka's 60th Independence Day celebrations. It was a rare treat to see both Prime Minister of New Zealand and the Leader of the opposition on the same stage. According to my 14 years of memory this is the first time that USLA has managed to have them both together on the same stage for any of our functions.

Just a week before this event, I had to leave to Sri Lanka for a close family bereavement. I was away for a week and came back to New Zealand just a day before the celebrations.

During my absence, committee and supporters, irrespective of whether they were USLA members or not, had seen to all arrangements meticulously, that I could not believe my eyes when I found out I had hardly anything to do. This was indeed a pleasant surprise that I will never forget. The stage decorations, Hall arrangements, entertainment, reception, security etc had been almost perfected.

The Sri Lankan community and the members of USLA who participated said that they enjoyed this memorable event. I would like to convey my special thanks to Mr. Sunil Arewgoda and his team for the excellent job done.

I may not be able to thank others individually but may I offer my profuse thanks to everyone who helped me in various ways to make this important event of Sri Lanka's history a remarkable and enjoyable one.

Gamini Siriwardane
Acting President

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Views Expressed in
articles are those of the
contributing authors
and may not necessarily
reflect the views of
USLA Auckland..

Please send in your
articles for the
next issue before
the 31st of March.

USLA Coffee Evening will be held every first Saturday of each month at 4.00pm in Mt Albert Senior Citizens' Hall. All members and non-members are welcome.

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United Sri Lanka Association would like to kindly remind members to renew their membership for 2008 and also encourage other Sri Lankans to join as new members of the association.

Sri Lanka's 60th Independence Day celebrations



Key note address

graced by the presence of New Zealand's Prime Minister, Opposition Leader, several Cabinet Ministers and distinguished guests at the same forum, **perhaps one of rarest occasions, in my view.**

As was witnessed by hundreds of people, our Chief Guest,



Paying tribute to the National heroes.

event.

My parting comment.....

I conclude my comment on the occasion with a humble plea to the whole community to band together, to show unity and solidarity, to lead by example and to be worthy ambassadors to our wonderful mother land, Sri Lanka. **United we stand.....**



Tamil Dance Item

Word of thank you" from the Event Organizer

United Sri Lanka Association, Auckland branch marked yet another successful event, Sri Lanka's 60th Independence Day Celebrations on 9th Feb. 2008, amidst one of the biggest gatherings of our community. Our celebrations were



Ven Maha Sanga and Distinguished Guests

the Prime Minister and others were welcomed to the ceremony by a colourful procession of Traditional Sri Lankan Drummers, whose efforts were admired by all. This was followed by a few selected cultural performances and a hearty meal which was possible due to the generous contributions by many.

Events such as this, that bear such cultural and social significance in our community is the culmination of the **small contributions made by many.** As the event organizer, let me extend our heartfelt gratitude on behalf of the Committee to all those who contributed and were present, which enabled us to make it such a successful

Sunil Arewgodana



Singing of Jayamangala Gatha

For more photos go to page 20

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~ මිනිස්සුන් ~

FREEDOM IS NOTHING ELSE BUT A CHANCE TO BE BETTER

~Albert Camus (a French author)~

Children's Corner

Cities/Towns of Sri Lanka
What they are & noted for.

Ratnapura	-	Gems
Anuradhapura	-	Ruins of ancient buildings, tanks, ponds, statues etc. Ancient Capital. Posen festival is celebrated here.
Tissamaharamaya	-	Largest Dagoba in the South.
Hambantota	-	Salt-pans are found & Salt is produced.
Nuwara-Eliya	-	Coldest town. Tea is planted and produced for local & export markets.
Ambalangoda	-	Known for puppetry.
Devinuwara	-	Southern most tip of Sri Lanka. Has the tallest light house.
Elahera	-	Gems
Embilipitiya	-	Recently developed town ship. Mainly agricultural.
Polonnaruwa	-	Ancient buildings, Carvings, Statues etc. Tourist Attraction. Ancient capital.
Avissawella	-	Rubber cultivation on big scale.

Shaanil Senarath.



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(09) 8280185

Laugh with me!

Father: - Son, you must not fight like that, you should learn to give and take.
 Son: - I did, I gave him a punch and took his mango.
 Andrew: - How long will the next bus be?
 Peter: - Oh! About twenty feet, I think.

Teacher: - Can you name the four seasons?
 Student: - Salt, Pepper, Mustard, Vinegar.

Nisha Senarath
 Age 10.

Senior Citizens' Trip 2008



The old Sinhala adage 'අම්බල හා දහ එළි' (Feet that walked worth thousands) applies to the fortuitous chance afforded by USLA to Sri Lankan Senior Citizens, on 12 January 2008. They feasted their eyes viewing the countryside, nature-built glow worm caves, waterfalls, a natural bridge, compared to the man made dagabes, temples and tanks seen by them in Sri Lanka.

The 202 km journey by bus commenced at 7.45 am from Mt. Albert, with the Vice President USLA Gamini Siriwardane welcoming all on board, introducing the committee members and requesting seniors to make friends with each other. He invited all to sing; which he lead with much vigour. His incredible repertoire of songs was match-

less. The only debit was the absence of a musical instrument.

After a short break for tea, at Huntly, the destination was the world famous caves unique for its glow worms-*Archnocampa Luminosa*. These tiny creatures in their thousands did radiate their luminescent light; particularly when passing through the dark grotto, by boat. On the way to the grotto, the guide showed the ornate cave decorations formed over thousands of years by nature. The most spectacular was the 'Cathedral' and the 'Marriage Ceremony' decorations of stalactites, stalagmites and sculptures developed over many centuries.

From Waitomo, they took us to the massive waterfall at Marakopa, Piripiri cave and to admire the natural bridge at Mangapohue; which was a spectacular site-



many meters high up in the air, with the stream flowing at the bottom; and to be crossed by visitors walking on a suspension bridge - another thrill experienced by seniors.

The unparalleled kindness and hospitality shown by USLA organisers could be seen by the flood of snacks, the lavish picnic lunch provided on the wayside and affording the comfort of easing oneself at frequent intervals - indeed, a necessity to the seniors going on a long trip. The most commendable act was the personal assistance

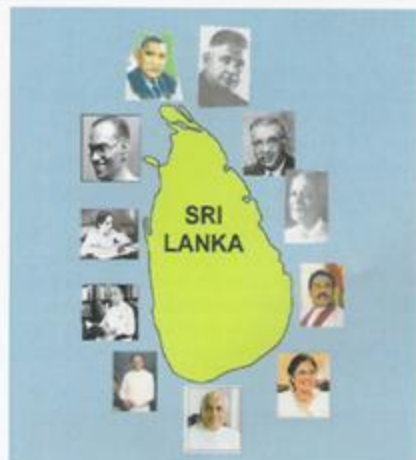


provided to those weak and feeble seniors,

to walk through the dimly lit caves. The seniors wish to express their heartfelt gratitude for the kindness shown by USLA organisers and for tasty snacks, meals provided free of charge and bringing us back home safely before dusk. Thank you once again.



P. Lucian Fernando
Photography by Sunil Arewgod



60 Years of Independence

I remember as a very young child my parents took me all the way from Galle to Galle Face Green to see the celebrations & fireworks when Duke of Gloucester came to Ceylon to grant us independence, somewhere end of 1947.

There were no Guest Houses or small Motels that we locals could afford to spend a night, in Colombo, then. The Galle Face Hotel, Grand Oriental Hotel and Mount Lavinia Hotel catered to the European clients only. There were clubs and swimming pools like the Colombo Swimming Club that accommodated only Europeans. "Natives" were not accepted and were not allowed in!!! Unless you put up at a friends place for the night, accommodation was difficult. So we drove back to Galle the same night.

I also saw the ceremony at the Galle esplanade on 4th February 1948, where the European Government Agent together with other officers hoisted the Ceylon Flag. There were temporary tents made with "Pol-

Athu" roofs. Since my father worked at the Galle Kachcheri, we were privileged to be invited for this memorable ceremony. So my parents and I witnessed this unforgettable occasion. I was never left at home with domestic aides. So wherever my parents went, I was sure to go.

Our first Prime Minister was Rt Hon Don Stephen Senanayake. He was a stately looking man and everybody admired him. However, there were dissensions among his Cabinet Ministers and the Minister of Health & Local Government Mr. S.W.R.D. Bandaranayake left the governing party, crossed over to the opposition and formed a new party on 2nd September 1951. This party was called Sri Lanka Freedom Party-S.L.F.P. Thus began the "war" in Ceylon politics, when people divided themselves in to major parties, later on.

D.S. could not hold out long, for on the 22nd of March 1952 he passed away, as a result of falling off a horse, while exercising at Galle Face Green. His son Mr. Dudley Shelton Senanayake, who was the Minister of Agriculture then, took over as P.M. He soon dissolved Parliament. At the new election he was returned to power.

It became known soon, that some senior United National Party-U.N.P. members agitated and gave Dudley less & less peace of mind. Dudley was known as a passive person. He handed over the Premiership to Sir John Kotalawala and kept away from politics.

Sir John had a very colourful personality. He had army training and always called a spade a spade. This was not Ceylon politics. Our masses like traditional hypocrites who gave up their religion and dress to enter politics. Sir John never wore the national dress to win the hearts of the masses. He was what he was. He could not survive under these circumstances for long and when the election was held in April 1956 Sir John lost. Mr. Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranayake became Prime Minister. He donned the national dress. He said he would make Sinhala only as the national language within 24 hours and also promised to recognise Buddhism as the state religion.

The masses rejoiced. They called the new government "Ape Aanduwa". The previous governments from 1952 up to 1956 were all elected democratically by the people, but I do not know why this was called Ape Aanduwa when they were all "ape andu". The new Prime Minister faced trouble from the start. There were hundreds of strikes. Sparks of hatred between Sinhalese and Tamils started in 1958, over language issues. This could not last long & Mr.S.W.R.D. met with a tragic death, on 26th September 1959. A priest called Somarama, shot him at his Rosmead Place, residence.

Galle's W.Dahanayake took over and was P.M. for a short time. Soon at the following election in March 1960 Mr. Dudley Senanayake won again. His government was defeated at the throne speech

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"Treaty of Waitangi"

From a Sri Lankan's point of view.

The month of February is politically very important to both Sri Lankans and New Zealanders. The reasons are Sri Lankans gained Independence on the 4th February 1948 and the Maori signed the "Treaty of Waitangi" (the founding document of New Zealand) on 06th February 1840.

Sri Lanka has more than 2500 years of history which included an advanced, irrigation and construction system even before the British arrived in the 17th century. Sri Lankans also had a very high standard of literacy and art work at that time.

The Maori people are the native people of New Zealand and Maori legend says that 1000 years ago the Maori came from "Hawaiki" which they believed was an island near Hawaii. They named this beautiful country "Aotearoa" which means the "Land of the long white cloud".

In the 16th and 17th centuries Europeans started travelling around the world to find new lands for resources. As a result of this an Italian explorer "Christopher Columbus" found America in 1492. A Dutch navigator William Janszoon found Australia in 1606, in 1505 a Portuguese navigator Francisco De Almeida found Sri Lanka, and Dutch explorer Abel Tasman discovered New Zealand in 1642.

Francisco De Alameda did not have many difficulties with the Sri Lankans on his first visit, so he slowly and smoothly built up a trade relationship with Sri Lanka. But Abel Tasman's first encounter with the Maori people was not a pleasant one. Four members of his crew were killed in battle; he managed to return to Holland with a map of the west coast of New Zealand which covered from Hokitika up to Cape Maria Van Diemen. Subsequently a Dutch map maker named this brand new country as Nieuw Zeeland.

From the day of Francisco De Alameda's discovery of Sri Lanka the island became a very good trade link for the whole of Europe. Changing hands between the Portuguese to the Dutch and then to the British, the island finally became a British colony in 1815 with the "Udarata Givisuma" treaty signed between the British crown and Sri Lankan ministers.

127 years after Abel Tasman's discovery of New Zealand the British navigator James Cook visited New Zealand in 1769 and sailed completely around the country, he mapped the whole coast and reported to Britain about the country's inhabitants and resources. After this friendly man's visit European ships frequently visited New Zealand. The Maori population was around 100,000 at this time and they were divided in to major groups and spread throughout the country.

Another important landmark of New Zealand's history is the arrival of Christian missionaries in 1814. From these missionaries the Maori learnt Christianity, farming techniques, manufacturing and how to read and write. Missionaries also transcribed the Maori language in to written form.

In the 1830s the British government came under increasing pressure to control the lawlessness in New Zealand and to protect British traders against the French, who also had imperial ambitions. The missionaries for their part wanted to protect the Maori from the effects of European settlement.

In 1833 James Busby who was responsible for making the treaty was sent to New Zealand as the British Resident by the British Crown. Seven years after his arrival he achieved his target by signing the treaty with Maori chiefs on 06th February 1840. The treaty was then sent all around the country and eventually more than 500 Maori chiefs signed it although some did not.

After ruling Sri Lanka more than 100 years, the British Crown decided to hand the country back to the Sri Lankan people bowing to increasing pressure. Many Sri Lankans sacrificed their lives during this freedom struggle and eventually on 4th February 1948 Sri Lanka gained its independence.

Even though these two separate histories have some similarities the major difference is while Sri Lankans decided to be independent, New Zealanders tied themselves to the British Crown in this same month.

However, the future will decide who had made the right decision!

~Niranjan Herath~

Health Corner...

Amazing fruit, Banana!

After reading this, you will never look at a banana in the same way again. Bananas contain three natural sugars - sucrose, fructose and glucose combined with fiber. A banana gives an instant, sustained and substantial boost of energy. Research has proven that just two bananas provide enough energy for a strenuous 90 minute workout. No wonder the banana is the number one fruit with the world's leading athletes. But energy isn't the only way a banana can help us keep fit. It can also help overcome or prevent a substantial number of illnesses and conditions, making it a must to add to our daily diet.

Depression: According to a recent survey result, people suffering from depression, many felt much better after eating a banana. This is because bananas contain tryptophan, a type of protein that the body converts into serotonin, known to make you relax, improve your mood and generally make you feel happier.

PMS (Premenstrual Syndrome): Forget the pills - eat a banana. The vitamin B6 it contains regulates blood glucose levels, which can affect your mood.

Anemia: High in iron, bananas can stimulate the production of haemoglobin in the blood and so helps in cases of anaemia.

Blood Pressure: Banana is extremely high in potassium yet low in salt, making it perfect to beat blood pressure.

Brain Power: Research has shown that the potassium-packed fruit can assist learning by making pupils more alert.

Constipation: High in fiber, including bananas in the diet can help restore normal bowel ac-

tion, helping to overcome the problem without resorting to laxatives.

Hangovers: One of the quickest ways of curing is to make a banana milkshake, sweetened with honey. The banana calms the stomach and, with the help of the honey, builds up depleted blood sugar levels, while the milk soothes and re-hydrates your system.

Heartburn: Bananas have natural antacid effect in the body, so if you suffer heartburn, try eating a banana for soothing relief.

Morning Sickness: Snacking on bananas between meals helps to keep blood sugar levels up and avoid morning sickness.

Mosquito bites: Before reaching for the insect bite cream, try rubbing the affected area with the inside of a banana skin. Many people find it amazingly successful at reducing swelling and irritation.

Nerves: Bananas are high in B vitamins that help calm the nervous system.

Overweight and at work: Normally the pressure at work leads to gorging on comfort food like chocolate and chips. And also most obese were more likely to be in high-pressure jobs. To avoid panic-induced food cravings, we need to control our blood sugar levels by snacking on high carbohydrate foods every two hours to keep levels steady.

Ulcers: The banana is used as a dietary food against intestinal disorders because of its soft texture and smoothness. It also neutralises over acidity and reduces irritation by coating the lining of the stomach.

Temperature control: Many other cultures see banana as a cooling fruit that can lower the physical and emotional tempera-

ture of expectant mothers.

SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder): Banana can help SAD sufferers because they contain the natural mood enhancer tryptophan.

Smoking & Tobacco Use: Bananas can also help people trying to give up smoking. The B6, B12 they contain, as well as the potassium and magnesium found in them, help the body recover from the effect of nicotine withdrawal.

Stress: Potassium is vital mineral, which helps normalise the heartbeat, sends oxygen to the brain and regulates your body's water balance. When we are stressed our metabolic rate rises, thereby reducing our potassium levels. These can be rebalanced with the help of a high potassium banana snack.

Strokes: Eating banana as part of a regular diet can cut the risk of death by strokes by as much as 40%.

Warts: Those keen on natural alternatives swear that if you want to kill off a wart, take a piece of banana skin and place it on the wart, with the yellow side out. Carefully hold the skin in place with a plaster or surgical tape.

So, a banana really is a natural remedy for many ills. When you compare it to an apple, it has 4 times the protein, twice the carbohydrate, 3 times the phosphorus, 5 times the Vitamin A & Iron, and twice the other vitamins and minerals. It is also rich in potassium and is one of the best value food around.

So may be time to change that well-known phrase so that we say "A banana a day keeps the doctor away!"

P. Lucian Fernando
(Information obtained from books and Journals)

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE RESOURCE CONSENT PROCEDURE

(Please note the first part of this article was in the Last issue)

Similarly Council may or may not consider granting of consent for these types of applications, if it is granted it will be subject to conditions. Conditions are imposed in a consent report to ensure that any adverse effects to the environment to be avoided remedied or mitigated.

How to determine the immediate affected person

For e.g. If you are infringing the building coverage rule by extending the existing dwelling or building new dwelling more towards your neighbour's property it will be assessed as a Discretionary Activity and will require that neighbour's written consent because it is considered that owner will not have reasonable access of receiving daylight, sunlight to the property and will lose privacy as a result of the proposal.

What is a Non Complying Activity

Is an activity where provisions has not been made or overlooked in a District/Regional Plan but an activity, which is not prohibited by a District/Regional Plan. (Where provisions has not been made in a District/Regional Plan to assess an application as Controlled/Limited Discretionary or as a Discretionary Activity)

What happens if the neighbours do not give written approval

When an applicant requires several written approvals for a development proposal, in some instances the developer will not be able to obtain all such approvals, as there may be person(s) who will disagree to the proposed activity for their own reasons. In such cases the application may be assessed as a limited notified or publicly notified application. The Council will send a copy of the proposal to all the affected person(s) Council may consider that is necessary and written submissions will be called from such person(s) to be submitted within a specific period of time.

Limited Notified Application

The notification will be given only to a limited number of persons where Council will consider necessary. In most cases it may be 1,2,3 or more persons who may be residing adjoining to the subject site.

Publicly Notified Applications

Notification will be given to a wider area where Council may consider will be necessary. In addition, a public notice board will be erected in the subject site giving details of the proposed development and any person could forward interest/objections to the Council within the specified time period.

After the closing day of submissions those will be referred to a Hearing Committee. The Hearing Committee will call all the person(s) who have made submissions (some say they wish to attend and some say they do not wish to attend the hearing) the developer and will hear the case. This will give an opportunity for persons to give their opinion in favour or not with giving the developer an opportunity to present their case of their intended development.

Once the hearing is over, after going through the proceedings of the hearing, the Council will make a decision whether to grant the consent subject to conditions or whether to decline the application. The decision will be conveyed to all those who attended the hearing.

If any person(s) is not satisfied with the Council's decision they could appeal to the Environment Court.

SUBDIVISIONS

A very hot topic for many people who are interested in purchasing of properties today. Subdividing means you are dividing the land either in to two or more lots. The minimum land parcel required for a subdivision may vary depending on the District/Regional Plan zoning for the particular area.

For any subdivision, a resource consent will be needed as a controlled activity or limited discretionary activity.

By Ivan Gunarathna

