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New regulations for Canadian citizenship



By Siva Sivapragasam

The federal government is introducing a series of new regulations to the Citizenship Act that will reduce processing times, extend residency requirements and crack down on fraud.

"Our government is strengthening the values of Canadian citizenship" said Chris Alexander, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. "Canadians understand that citizenship should not be simply a passport of convenience. Citizenship is a pledge of mutual responsibility and a shared commitment to values rooted in our history," he stated.

Under the new changes permanent residents will have to reside in Canada for four years compared to the current three years.

The new bill will also increase the age range for language proficiency and pass a knowledge test from the current 18- 54 to those aged 14- 64.

The processing system will also become a one-stop process rather than a three-step assessment process, with citizenship of-

ficers making the decisions in most cases rather than citizenship judges. Adults who apply for citizenship will also have to show they have filed Canadian income taxes. According to Minister Alexander these changes would help to reduce the backlog which currently stands at 320,000 applications. The government hopes to reduce the wait time from two to three years, to less than a year by 2015-16.

The other changes will include:

- An increase in the application fees for each adult to \$300 from \$100, which will be effective immediately. Fees for minors would remain the same.
- Fast-track citizenship for permanent residents serving with the Canadian Armed Forces.
- Give the immigration minister greater powers to revoke citizenship in extreme cases.
- Increased regulation of immigration consultants and high penalties for misconduct in an effort to crack down on fraud.
- Retroactively grant citizenship to the "Lost Canadians" and their children.



Hon Lynne Yelich, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Canada addresses during the High Level Segment of the 2014 Conference on Disarmament, Palais des Nations, Geneva. Tuesday 4 March. Photo by Violaine Martin (also see page 5 - Canada and Human Rights Challenges Around the Globe)

Prime Minister of India meets President of Sri Lanka as Human Rights Vote Looms

Brushing aside opposition from political parties Tamil Nadu, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on March 4th met Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa. They met after the opening of the 3rd The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIM-STECC) summit in Nay Pyi Taw, Burma.

However, Prime Minister Singh did not give him any assurance on which way India will vote on a UNHRC resolution for an independent international probe into rights abuses during the war through May 2009.

The draft resolution, tabled at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on March 3, briefly figured during the 25-minute meeting Singh had with Rajapaksa here on the margins of the BIMSTECC Summit.

"There was no substantive discussion on the draft resolution. Given that it has important implications for both Sri Lanka and India, it was felt that the two sides should remain in touch on the issue," Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Syed Akbaruddin told reporters after the talks.

The resolution sponsored by the US, the UK, Montenegro, Macedonia and Mauritius urged the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay to assess progress toward accountability and reconciliation, monitor relevant national processes and to investigate alleged violations and abuses of human rights and related crimes in Sri Lanka.

Contd. on Page 4...

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Canada's Foreign Affairs Minister Promotes Territorial Integrity and National Unity in Ukraine



Baird Pays Respects at Maidan Memorial

Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird on February 28 wrapped up a successful mission to Ukraine, where he and the Canadian delegation of parliamentarians and representatives of the Ukrainian community met with key members of the new government.

Baird met with acting president Oleksander Turchynov, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, acting foreign minister Andriy Deschtytsya, Ukrainian Democratic Alliance for Reform leader Vitali Klitschko, All-Ukrainian Union Svoboda leader Oleh Tyahnybok, Chair of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Group Volodymyr Polochaninov, former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko, as well as other opposition and civil society members.

He also met with the major organizers of Maidan civil society, representatives from Ukraine's religious communities including Crimean Tatars, and visited the medical centre at St. Michael's Monastery, where he announced increased financial support for providing medical care to injured protesters.

Members of the Canadian delegation walked through the Maidan and paid their respects to the fallen protesters who died for the cause of democracy. "Their sacrifice in the defence of their democracy and freedom has brought change to this country," said Baird. "They will not be forgotten."

Baird congratulated the new government and emphasized the need to honour the 1994 Budapest Declaration's commitment to Ukraine's territorial sovereignty and national unity at this critical time. He also reiterated Canada's support for Ukraine and its efforts to rebuild the country, including through the International Monetary Fund, following the instability and violence of the last 100 days. Many of his meetings featured discussions on ways to reduce corruption, combat money laundering and manage the financial transition.

"Canada remains committed to work-

ing in concert with our allies to develop a plan to assist Ukraine's economic and democratic future," said Baird.

The Canadian delegation consisted of Ted Opitz, Member of Parliament for Etobicoke Centre; James Bezan, Member of Parliament for Selkirk—Interlake; Senator Raynell Andreychuk; Victor Hetmanyczuk, President and CEO, Canada-Ukraine Foundation; Paul Grod, President, Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC); Taras Zalusky, Executive Director, UCC; and Krystina Waler, board member, Ukrainian Canadian Professionals and Business Association.

Canada's Response to the Situation in Ukraine

Canada has been among the most vocal in the international community in expressing our disapproval over democratic back-sliding and repression in Ukraine. We remain very concerned about the situation in Ukraine and continue to monitor developments with considerable interest.

We have adopted a policy that balances continued principled engagement with consistent messaging and action to urge the Ukrainian Administration to respect international norms of democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law.

Canada has traditionally had strong ties to Ukraine. Since 1991, we have contributed more than \$410 million in bilateral Official Development Assistance to Ukraine.

In this time of crisis, Canada is providing medical care for Ukrainian activists through a contribution to a Ukrainian non-governmental organization, including vital supplies, first aid kits and training.

Canada stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine in their fight for a free and democratic Ukraine.

Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD) advises against all travel to Crimea and advises that if you are presently in Crimea, you should consider leaving while it is safe to do so.

(via international.gc.ca)

John Tory Announces Candidacy for Mayor Vows to build relief line



On February 24, 2014, John Tory announced he is running for Mayor of Toronto.

"As Mayor, I will devote every day to making our city more liveable, more affordable and more functional.

To make Toronto more liveable, my number one priority will be to build transit and fix traffic congestion.

I will make building the subway relief line my top priority.

To make Toronto more affordable, I will keep taxes low, especially property taxes.

To make Toronto more functional, I will bring people together at City Hall to get things done, and work with both the provincial and federal levels of government", said John Tory.

John Tory brings unparalleled experience and a deep passion for Toronto to the Mayor's race, and looks forward to sharing his plan for Toronto in greater detail over the next eight months.

For more information please visit <http://johntory.ca>.

About John Tory

John Tory is a husband, father, grandfather, businessman, lawyer, volunteer and community activist. He has shown that he has the passion and the experience to build a more liveable, affordable, and functional Toronto.

John knows how to successfully lead, manage and obtain results from large, complex organizations. This proven ability to bring people together is evident throughout his career, including as CEO of one of Canada's largest publishing and broadcasting companies, and as Commissioner and Chairman of the Canadian Football League. His leadership has been widely credited with returning that national institution to stability.

John's involvement in our community has come full-circle. Many know him most recently as the evening host of Live Drive with John Tory, but his first experience with City Hall all dates back to the early 1970's when he was a member of the City Hall Press Gallery as a reporter, interviewer and newscaster for two local radio stations. He has also served in public office as a Member of Provincial Parliament, Leader of the Ontario PC Party, and Leader of the Official Opposition at Queen's Park.

In 2012, John was appointed by the Ontario Liberal government to chair a special panel that outlined recommendations on revitalizing Ontario Place on Toronto's waterfront. John is also a founding member and former Chair of the Greater Toronto CivicAction Alliance. Through CivicAction, John has brought together people from all corners of Toronto to champion solutions to the city's most challenging issues. John was recently awarded the Order of Ontario for being a "consummate champion for the Greater Toronto Region."

John's passion for Toronto and his commitment to the values of tolerance and compassion are especially evident through his many years as a volunteer, fundraiser and community activist. He has been a volunteer director and has championed the causes of such organizations as the Canadian Paraplegic Association, Crimestoppers, St. Michael's Hospital, Toronto Association for Community Living, the United Way, and the Women's Legal Education & Action Fund (LEAF).

He and his wife Barb have been married since 1978. They have raised their four children, John Jr., Christopher, Susan and George, in Toronto, and are proud grandparents.

from the publisher's desk

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Marking World Water Day

- March 22



Severe drought is having a bleak outlook on food security and hydro power generation in Sri Lanka. Paddy farmers in North and elsewhere and tea plantations in Central Sri Lanka are too are affected by the no rain conditions. Hydro power generation is in a dire situation. By the third week of February, the primary power utility in Sri Lanka, Ceylon Electricity Board said it was relying on expensive thermal generators for 76 per cent of the country's power supply.

Such crippling blow is faced by many around the globe, including in the farming belt of California which will potentially result in higher food prices.

Amidst these stark reminders comes the World Water Day 2014 – observed on March 22.

Monsoon Journal joins in bringing awareness on this important topic, and the following are the objectives of The World Water Day this year:

In 2014, the UN System – working closely with its Member States and other relevant stakeholders – is collectively bringing its attention to the water-energy nexus, particularly addressing inequities, especially for the 'bottom billion' who live in slums and impoverished rural areas and survive without access to safe drinking water, adequate sanitation, sufficient food and energy services. It also aims to facilitate the development of policies and crosscutting frameworks that bridge ministries and sectors, leading the way to energy security and sustainable water use in a green economy. Particular attention will be paid to identifying best practices that can make a water- and energy-efficient 'Green Industry' a reality.

Raise awareness of the inter-linkages between water and energy
 Contribute to a policy dialogue that focuses on the broad range of issues related to the nexus of water and energy

Demonstrate, through case studies, to decision makers in the energy sector and the water domain that integrated approaches and solutions to water-energy issues can achieve greater economic and social impacts

Identify policy formulation and capacity development issues in which the UN system, in particular UN-Water and UN-Energy, can offer significant contributions

Identify key stakeholders in the water-energy nexus and actively engaging them in further developing the water-energy linkages

Contribute as relevant to the post-2015 discussions in relation to the water-energy nexus.

The Water Day also want to foster awareness in these key aspects:

1. Water requires energy and energy requires water

Water is required to produce nearly all forms of energy. Energy is needed at all stages of water extraction, treatment and distribution.

2. Supplies are limited and demand is increasing

Demand for freshwater and energy will continue to increase significantly over the coming decades. This increase will present big challenges and strain resources in nearly all regions, especially in developing and emerging economies.

3. Saving energy is saving water. Saving water is saving energy
 Choices concerning the supply, distribution, price, and use of water and energy impact one another.

4. The "bottom billion" urgently needs access to both water and sanitation services, and electricity

Worldwide, 1.3 billion people

cannot access electricity, 768 million people lack access to improved water sources and 2.5 billion people have no improved sanitation. Water and energy have crucial impacts on poverty alleviation.

5. Improving water and energy efficiency is imperative as are coordinated, coherent and concerted policies

Better understanding between the two sectors of the connections and effects on each other will improve coordination in energy and water planning, leading to reducing inefficiencies. Policy-makers, planners and practitioners can take steps to overcome the barriers that exist between their respective domains. Innovative and pragmatic national policies can lead to more efficient and cost effective provision of water and energy services.

Several events will take place around the globe, marking World Water Day.

Here in at home, "Canada Water Week" is a week-long celebration of water from coast-to-coast-to-coast, held annually in the third week of March (Mar 17-23 this year) to coincide with World Water Day on March 22.

The University of Waterloo has announced that it will hold a day-long celebration of World Water Day on March 21, highlighting university water research and raising awareness of local and global water issues. The event will highlight the breadth and depth of water research here in Waterloo, and also act as a meeting place for water researchers, practitioners, and stakeholders.

Prime Minister of India meets President of Sri Lanka

Contd. from page 1

Parties in Tamil Nadu, especially the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), which snapped its support to the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government of PM Manmohan Singh last year, have attacked the prime minister on his plans to meet Rajapaksa.

They said it would be construed as a betrayal of Tamil interests. They want India itself to move

the resolution in the UNHRC seeking punishment for those responsible for the alleged war crimes in Sri Lanka.

The resolution welcomed Pillay's recommendation on the need for an independent and credible international investigation in the absence of a credible national process with tangible results.

"No matter where you're from, your dreams are valid." – Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o (b: March 1, 1983)

Printing the Winds of Change around us All lands home, all men kin.

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Canada and Human Rights Challenges Around the Globe

By **Hon Lynne Yelich**

Minister of State
(Foreign Affairs and Consular)

Numerous urgent human rights challenges face the international community; these deserve our collective attention, energy and effort.

The magnitude of the death and destruction that the people of Syria continue to endure, largely at the hands of the Assad regime, continues to shock our collective conscience and has led to a human catastrophe. The abduction of nuns and religious leaders, reports of forced conversions by extremists and attacks against monasteries are also disturbing. As efforts continue to bring an end to the violence through a political agreement, we must all do our utmost to ensure a focus on the victims, to urge respect for human rights and international law and to work for the resumption of the rule of law. I urge members to speak with one voice to ensure that those responsible for this crisis are held accountable.

And while global attention has been focused on urgent crises in Syria, the Central African Republic and South Sudan, systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights—violations without comparison in the modern era—have continued unabated in North Korea. The rogue North Korean regime's vicious disregard for the welfare of its people, its rejection of freedom of expression, its use of gulags, arbitrary detentions, intergenerational punishment, forced abortions and indefinite holding of political prisoners verge on the unspeakable and demand universal condemnation and continued emphasis by this council. Reports that even possessing a Bible or watching foreign television programs can land someone in prison are extremely troubling.

The International Commission of Inquiry on North Korea has done important work. When the day comes that the veils of darkness are lifted in Pyongyang [North Korea], I hope it will be known that this council was on the right side of history in holding this dictatorship to account. We must not, as was the case with the International Commission of Inquiry on Libya, leave the Commission of Inquiry's clarion call unanswered. As the 19th century abolitionist William Wilberforce stated, "you may choose to look the

other way but you can never say again that you did not know." I urge members of this council to bear this responsibility in mind.

In Iran, people continue to live in fear of enforced disappearance, arbitrary imprisonment and torture by the regime. Despite a change in presidency, hundreds of political prisoners languish, including members of the Bahá'í community and others who simply wish to worship in peace. Canada continues to support the work of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iran in monitoring and reporting on human rights violations, and encourages the Iranian authorities to cooperate with the international community.

In Sri Lanka, we regret the unwillingness of the [Sri Lankan] government to engage constructively on the substance of various reports or to take genuine steps for reconciliation and accountability. Previous internal mechanisms have, regrettably, remained secret, partial or unfulfilled, and the continued inability to acknowledge what has occurred, combined with increasing rights violations and abuses, will not only continue to damage the rule of law and democracy in this vibrant country but will risk undermining economic gains and a return to instability. In the absence of credible



Hon Lynne Yelich

actions by the Government of Sri Lanka, Canada supports the call for an international inquiry mechanism.

Finally, in recent days we have seen a military intervention by Russia on the territory of an independent and sovereign country, Ukraine. Canada condemns these actions in the strongest terms.

This military intervention is a clear violation of international law. It also threatens the human rights of Ukraine's citizens.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has called on President [Vladimir] Putin to immediately withdraw his forces to their

bases and to refrain from further provocative and dangerous actions. Canada also supports the immediate deployment to Ukraine of international monitors from the United Nations and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

For years, Canada has championed the empowerment of women and girls, in particular the cause of ending violence against women and girls.

Canada is proud to be recognized as a world leader in protecting the health of vulnerable women and children around the world. Our G-8 Muskoka Initiative [on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health] will save the lives of 1.3 million children and newborns—as well as more than 60,000 young mothers.

But much remains to be done.

Canada will continue to put the poorest and most vulnerable, including women and children, at the core of the post-2015 development agenda. And we will remain a champion of equality between men and women, women's economic empowerment and greater investment in girls.

(Excerpts from the Address by Minister of State Yelich to the High Level Segment of the 25th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council, March 3, 2014)

Cut small business tax rates while gradually raising the minimum wage: NDP

New Democrat Leader Andrea Horwath on Feb 25th laid out her plan to support Ontario's small businesses and the province's lowest-paid workers by phasing-in small business tax reductions, while gradually increasing the minimum wage to \$12 an hour.

"No one who works full-time should be left living in poverty," said Horwath. "We need to support people who are working hard to make ends meet, and help small businesses drive our economy forward."

The New Democrat plan would see the minimum wage rise to \$11 an hour on June 1 of this year, as planned, and then increase to \$11.50 on June 1 of 2015 and to \$12 on June 1 of 2016. In keeping with the recommendations of

the expert panel, the NDP plan would tie the minimum wage to inflation and give employers four months' notice before any subsequent increase.

"Families are getting squeezed, their bills are going up, fees are rising, hydro costs are skyrocketing, and they just can't keep up," said Horwath. "This is a small step we can take that helps ensure people who work full-time can pay the bills."

The NDP plan would also cut the small business tax rate from 4.5 per cent to 4 per cent this June, followed by a cut to 3.5 per cent in 2015 and 3 per cent in 2016.

"This plan is about more than giving people a raise," said Horwath. "It's about



taking a balanced approach to investing in our work force, and our economy. Our plan includes a gradual phase-in and tax cuts for small businesses to ensure that the change is positive for families, employers, and the entire Ontario economy."

- via ontariondp.com



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Sri Lanka's northern house-funding gap



More than US\$300 million is needed for the construction of over 60,000 new homes in Sri Lanka's conflict-affected north, say aid officials.

"There is very little, almost nothing that is coming by way of new funding for housing construction," Jagath Abeysinghe, president of the Sri Lanka Red Cross Society (SLRC) which is overseeing the construction of 20,000 new homes in Sri Lanka's Northern Province, told IRIN, attributing the shortfall to donor fatigue.

"We should have sought funding for housing more aggressively almost immediately after the war ended. Since then other emergencies have dominated the limited global funding pool," Abeysinghe said, calling for a government-led public appeal with the participation of the non-governmental and private sectors.

The authorities are looking for funding for 63,000 new houses in the five northern districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Mullaitivu, Kilinochchi, and Vavuniya to replace those destroyed during the country's decades-long civil war that ended on 18 May 2009, when government forces declared victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who had been fighting for an independent Tamil homeland.

According to a 2013 sample survey of 138,651 households in the north by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), only 32 percent of respondents had a permanent house; most (57 percent) lived in transitional or emergency shelters, and 6 percent lived with family and friends.

Of the 146,000 new houses that needed to be rebuilt after the war, just 41,000 have been delivered to returnees; 10,500 are under construction, according to UN-Habitat.

Funding by donors and the government for the construction of 83,000 houses has been secured, but further funding is required for another 63,000 houses, say the authorities.

"It is very difficult to raise the money needed for the remainder of the housing needs, because it is a big amount. There is a lot of donor weariness as well. It would need a sustained effort," said UN Habitat project manager Abdul Hameed.

According to public officials in the north, the bulk of the housing work is reliant on a single programme funded by

the Indian government.

"There is hardly any big programme concentrating on housing construction other than the Indian housing project. We have not heard anything about new funding," said Saravanabavan Mohanabavan, director of planning at the district secretariat in Kilinochchi, the former de-facto LTTE capital.

The \$270 million Indian Housing Project is the largest programme in the former conflict zone.

Launched in June 2010 to build 50,000 new houses, the project has completed 11,560 units. "The entire project is expected to be completed by December 2015," said Esha Srivastava, spokesperson for the Indian High Commission in Colombo.

Meanwhile, some of those without decent housing are losing hope. Ramalingam Selvarasa, a father-of-three from Kilinochchi, returned to his home village in mid-2010 to find his house a mound of rubble. It has yet to be rebuilt. For the past three years, his family has lived in a small corrugated iron shack.

"I lost all my savings in the war. I can't even think of building a toilet," the 45-year-old carpenter said. "I applied for a new house about a year and half back. So far I haven't heard anything from the government agent's office," Selvarasa said. "I don't know when I will get an answer. I honestly don't have any hope."

Such stories were common across the north with donor funding waning, Mohanabavan from the district secretariat said. The SLRC's Abeysinghe called for further funds for housing to accommodate the next potential influx of returnees to the country from India.

According to Indian government, there are more than 100,000 ethnic Tamil Sri Lankans in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu - 68,000 in 112 government-run camps and 32,000 outside the camps. Over the last three years, more than 5,000 have returned to Sri Lanka, UNHCR reported.

"At least we should make plans to meet their needs and learn from our past fundraising errors," Abeysinghe added.

(IRIN News-UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs)

Why Sri Lankan children in north drop out

By IRIN News

Sri Lankan authorities have expressed concern over an increasing number of reports that children are dropping out of school in the conflict-affected north, where economic pressure and poor prospects are creating conditions that could have negative consequences for the future development of the region.

Most of the dropouts are from poor families who find it difficult to make ends meet as humanitarian assistance dries up almost five years after decades of civil war ended. This situation is being aggravated by an acute lack of job opportunities and a rising cost of living. "It's a vicious cycle," said Sivalingam Sathyaseelan, Secretary to the provincial Ministry of Education.

"The main reason is the lack of jobs. There is no money in these families, and they need everybody that can work, to work," Sathyaseelan told IRIN. "They are able-bodied and can find odd jobs or agricultural work more easily," so there is growing pressure on children in their early teens, mostly at secondary school level, to leave the classroom.

The top public official in Kilinochchi District, Rupavathi Keetheswaran, the government agent, agreed. She described the situation for the estimated 40,000 households in the north that are headed by women, or those families with disabled members, as particularly dire, saying, "Sometimes the children don't have any option but to work. There is no one else to make money for the family."

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), these children generally find work doing temporary or manual jobs such as unskilled labourers in construction projects or on farms. "Sometimes the kids would just wander [around] 'til they find odd jobs," said Ramalingam Sivaparagam, the ILO national project coordinator, who noted that some children work for as little as US\$1.25 per day.

A study released in January by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), analyzing out-of-school children in four countries - Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka - says the island nation has close to universal participation in primary and lower secondary schooling, with just 0.07 percent of all primary and lower-secondary school-aged children not in school.

However, the data did not cover the districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya, which comprise Northern Province, where the final days of conflict were fought out. "It is important to remember that the Sri Lankan data excludes five districts in the North where conflict took place, and rates of school exclusion are known to be higher than average," the report points out.

Children living in the conflict-affected northern and eastern areas of the country have lower school participation than the national average, particularly in lower-



secondary education, the report conceded, with child labour cited one reason for dropouts.

Older children and young adults were motivated to drop out because jobs commensurate with high school or university graduation levels were very hard to find. "They have to settle for manual labour jobs if they remain in the region, so why not take them [out of school] now?" said Sathyaseelan, the top provincial education official.

This is particularly true in the more remote, interior areas of the region, where facilities and job opportunities are often nonexistent, and little investment is taking place. "There are no private enterprises, [and] very few government offices in the villages. The only thing that is there, is construction of houses or farm work," government agent Keetheswaran confirmed.

Ramadhass, a father of two girls, returned to the Visvamadhu area of Mullaitivu District in mid 2010, but was forced to take his oldest daughter out of school when he was no longer able to provide for his family with the meagre money he earned from his small vegetable garden.

"About a year after we returned, we had hardly any money, but there was a good market for scrap metal that could be collected. She skipped classes and came with me to collect metal," he said.

The father and daughter team earned just over \$2 for every kilogram of scrap they collected, much of it left over from the war. But since then the scrap metal market has become less lucrative. His daughter, now 14, has started doing odd jobs instead and he doesn't know whether she will ever return to school to complete her education.

Although he doesn't want his other daughter to leave school, the prospects don't look good. "I have given up farming. Now I also work as a labourer, and the family income depends on what she makes," he said.

According to ILO, the longer a child stays away from the classroom, the harder it is for them to catch up. "There are no night classes or extra classes for such dropouts right now. Without such assistance they find it extremely difficult to rejoin their studies," Sivaparagam said.

But without targeted programmes to identify drop-outs and help them, there is also no effective way of persuading them to return to school. "More so when money is very hard to come by for families," he said.



Sri Lanka President says his country must not face UN rights resolution

President Mahinda Rajapaksa on Friday, February 28 said that Sri Lanka should not face a UN Human Rights Council resolution, as he accused the US of bullying his country.

"A resolution is something that we are uncomfortable with, there should never be a resolution," the president said addressing Colombo-based foreign correspondents.

Rajapaksa was answering a query on the impending resolution against Sri Lanka at the UN rights body, the third in as many years. He hinted that there may be a hidden agenda behind the resolution.

Commenting on India's stance on the US-moved resolution, Rajapaksa said the current political climate in India had to be understood.

India had backed both previous UNHRC resolutions against Sri Lanka and voted with the US. "This is like Cassius Clay using a school boy as a punching bag," he said likening the US to the heavyweight boxing champion better known as Muhammad Ali.

He said the US action was part of the superpower's bullying tactics in the Indian Ocean region. Rajapaksa's government has faced international accusations

of human rights abuses by Sri Lankan troops against the LTTE who fought for a separate Tamil homeland in the north and east of the country.

He led an effective military campaign which ended the LTTE's three-decade separatist campaign in May 2009.

"No country has done so much to achieve reconciliation like us (Sri Lanka) within a short period of five years," Rajapaksa stressed.

Showing defiance in the face of the resolution, the Sri Lankan president yesterday mentioned his experiences on visits to Cuba and Israel recently.

"Both countries told me about the number of UN resolutions passed against them. Their leaders told me not to worry about UNHRC resolutions," he said.

Sri Lanka faces a third resolution in as many years next month at the UNHRC session censuring the country on its lack of progress on human rights accountability and reconciliation with the Tamil minority after the civil war ended.

A recent damning report by UN rights chief Navi Pillay has called for an international probe into allegations of war crimes committed by Sri Lankan troops during the final battle with the LTTE.

- PTI

Draft UN Resolution on Sri Lanka short of Tamil expectations



A Tamil diaspora organization, The British Tamils Forum (BTF) has said that the draft resolution tabled at the UN in Geneva on March 3 "fell short of Tamil expectations", according to a news report by Press Trust of India (PTI).

PTI report further states that the following is the response made by BTF regarding the proposed resolution tabled at United Nations Human Rights Council – (Voting on final version is anticipated at the end of this month, March 2014)

"The resolution requests another up-

date by the Human Rights Commissioner in a year's time and makes another call on Sri Lanka to launch a credible domestic inquiry, despite the Human Rights Commissioner herself declaring that Sri Lanka has no political will to investigate itself.

Five years on from the terrible massacres of 2009, the Tamil people have been told to put up with another year of lost land, lost people, further curtailment of rights, physical and sexual abuse".

Deepa Balachandran, B.A. (Hons.), B. Ed., J.D.
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Construction of Colombo-Jaffna Expressway begins

Colombo/Jaffna highway trip will take 6 hours only

Construction work of the Northern Expressway from Colombo to Jaffna has started, the Director General of the Road Development Authority (RDA) W.A.S. Weerasinghe has stated.

The 300-kilometer long highway will be constructed under four stages and the first stage of the project from Enderamulla to Ambepussa is expected to cost US\$ 1 billion and it would be completed with Chinese assistance.

The 52.8 km Enderamulla-Ambepussa stretch will have five interchanges, 50 overpasses and 30 underpasses.

The second phase of the project would see the extension of the expressway to Pallendeniya in Kurunegala. It will cover a distance of 39 km with three interchanges at Pothupitiya, Dampalassa and Pallendeniya. There will be 30 overpasses and five underpasses.

The third and final phases of the project will include the extension of the expressway from Pallendeniya to Dambulla and connecting to the A9 road to Jaffna



from Dambulla. The total cost of the project is estimated at US\$ 4.5 billion (Rs. 600 billion).

The authorities will give attention to opinions and suggestions of the people, who are being affected by the highway construction.

The cabinet has granted approval to provide compensation to the owners of the lands acquired according to the prevailing market prices within a period of six weeks.

The trip from Colombo to Jaffna on the expressway is estimated to take about six hours.

Cyber Thieves Increasingly Attack Mobile Devices



Cell phones, and other mobile devices, are increasingly the target of cyber criminals

By Matthew Hilburn

The amount of malicious software targeting mobile devices is exploding, according to security firm Kaspersky Lab.

Kaspersky said that in 2013 "nearly 100,000 new malicious programs for mobile devices were detected." That's more than two times the number detected the previous year, the company said.

As of January 1, 2014, Kaspersky Lab says it collected 143,211 mobile malware samples.

Rolf von Roessing, the former international vice president of the Information

Systems Audit and Control Association, ISACA, told information security professionals at the 2013 EuroCACS information security and risk management conference in London that a "tidal wave" of threats was emerging against mobile devices.

Android users are particularly vulnerable, with over 91 percent of the malware detected targeting the popular mobile operating system, according to Kaspersky.

"Android is currently more of a target than iOS, but attacks are happening against Apple mobile devices and, when

Tamil National Alliance Welcomes report on Sri Lanka by United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA) has welcomed the Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on promoting reconciliation and accountability in Sri Lanka to the 25th session of the Human Rights Council.

High Commissioner Navi Pillay's report contains a comprehensive and accurate depiction of the serious human rights issues facing Sri Lanka. The Report has benefited from the High Commissioner's visit to Sri Lanka, where she was able to observe first-hand the issues of concern to victims and survivors in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, the TNA said in a press release.

It added that the High Commissioner has raised a number of serious concerns in her Report which also pertain to the entire country: the treatment of former combatants and detainees; attacks on religious minorities; the attack on dissent and the freedom of expression; the government's dismal record in implementing LLRC recommendations; and the government's disinterest in making progress on accountability.

It added that the TNA also take serious note of the High Commissioner's observations on the impermissibility of amnesty provisions in respect of international crimes and gross violations of human rights.

The TNA has and continues to articulate victims' demands for truth, justice, just resolution of land issues reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence; the undesirability of blanket amnesty provisions; and the need to give effect to the duty to prosecute international crimes and gross human rights abuses.

The TNA also unequivocally supports the High Commissioner's recommendation that the Human Rights Council establish an international inquiry mechanism to further investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian and human rights laws, in addition

they are breached, it is usually fairly serious," said von Roessing.

Russia leads the world, claiming 40 percent of attacks. India was second with eight percent of attacks, and Vietnam and Ukraine were tie for third with four percent of attacks.

"Kaspersky's findings are consistent with the numbers being reported by other security vendors in their annual threat reports," said Christopher Burgess, CEO of Prevendra a Security, privacy and intelligence company. "The message? If you are using a mobile device, keep your operating system up to date, only download apps from trusted sources, and have in place security software to protect the content of your mobile device."



Navi Pillay, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights during the Special Session in the Central African Republic at the Human Rights Council, 20 January 2014. UN Photo / Jean-Marc Ferré

to monitoring any domestic processes for accountability initiated by the Government of Sri Lanka. We believe that such a mechanism is necessary in the light of the government's unwillingness to take steps towards accountability.

The statement added that the TNA is mindful of the important need for all communities in Sri Lanka to reckon with the past in a spirit of reconciliation. "We sincerely believe that an international Commission of Inquiry into allegations against both sides will provide our communities the space and environment to come to terms with crimes committed in our respective names. The TNA remains committed to leading the Tamil people through a painful process of introspection, and encourages the government to use the opportunity of an international inquiry to break with the past and meaningfully pursue reconciliation."

Kaspersky said the vast majority of mobile malware was made with the aim of stealing people's money. This kind of malware increased by a factor of 20, they said. Most of the malware was designed to phish, steal bank card information or to take money from bank accounts.

"Today, the majority of banking Trojan attacks target users in Russia and the CIS," said Victor Chebyshev, a virus analyst at Kaspersky in a statement. "However, that is unlikely to last for long: given cybercriminals' keen interest in consumer bank accounts, the activity of mobile banking Trojans is expected to grow in other countries in 2014."

- VOA News



Gold prices and equity markets in India to be affected by General elections says study

Outcome of Indian general election due in April-May with prospects of a stable new government would influence gold prices apart from equity markets, a study said.

"Gold prices in India may increase beyond Rs 32,000 per 10 grams in the coming few months in case the voters throw up a highly fractured mandate leading to an unstable government at the centre," industry body Assocham said in a study.

On the other hand, in case India gets a decisive government after elections even within a coalition framework, the investor bias will return towards equity and real estate and the gold may lose in the bargain of portfolio shuffling.

In its study 'Golden Connect of Indian Elections', the industry body said at the moment, three important factors are driving the global gold market.

"Concerns over Chinese economy, uncertainty over the pace of the US economic recovery and the anxiety around the Indian general election. India and China are competing with each other for retaining the slot of being the number one consumer of the yellow metal.

"The demand in these two markets is



going to increase should the two economies witness political or economic uncertainties," says the study.

It said the trend of the investors is shifting again to gold as a safe haven asset as prices have risen over 10% so far this year.

"In the case of a stable government, the sensx will zoom and the overall investor confidence about economic activities such as real estate, finance, consum-

er goods, two-wheelers and passenger cars will pick up immediately."

This will see money moving away from gold which can then see further easing trend. However, reverse trend will be seen should there is a highly fractured mandate, it said.

"While the global factors will certainly weigh on gold prices, the Indian market as a consumer of the yellow metal and for the equities would be surely affected by

the unfolding developments," Assocham secretary general D S Rawat said.

He said the yellow metal may still see increase in prices even if there is a stable government in India, if situation in Chinese economy worsens and the US economy does not pick up.

In that case too, global money will find haven in yellow metal, but for India alternate avenues for investment other than the gold will be clear, he added.

Global spot gold prices are hovering between \$1,330- 1,345 per ounce, drop of about 29% in 2013. But, the trend may again look positive, it said.

"...although there is an opinion which indicates a further drop in the yellow metal right to \$1,000 an ounce."

"Whatever is the case, India would matter since even despite severe restrictions and imposition of customs duty of 10%, the imports would exceed 500 tonne this year. After a fall in the previous few months, reports indicate that gold imports rose again to 38 tonne in January," Assocham said.

- PTI

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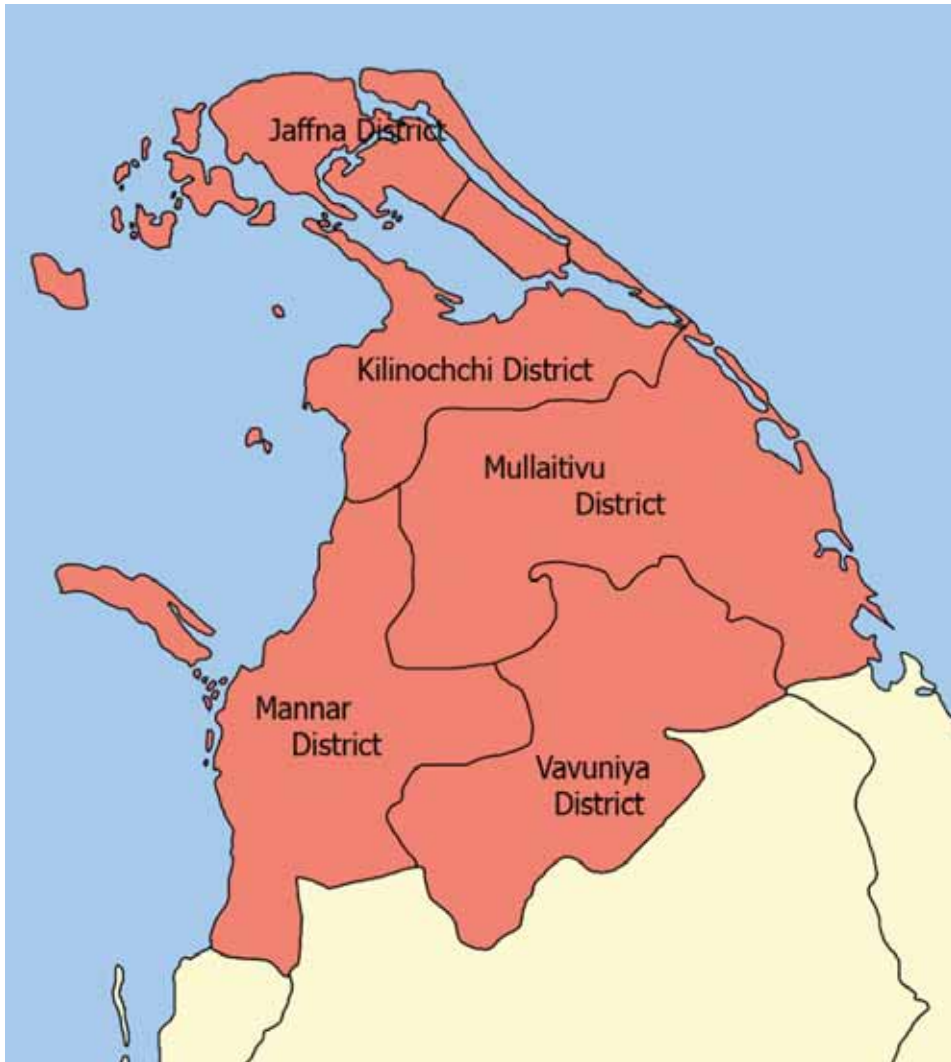
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Sri Lanka faces crucial talks in Geneva this month

- U.S. sponsored resolution against Sri Lanka on alleged war crimes and human rights abuses
- Sri Lanka says resolution politically motivated
- India's stand not officially announced yet



By Siva Sivapragasam

The much awaited and controversial U.S. sponsored resolution against Sri Lanka on alleged war crimes and Human Right abuses will be debated in Geneva and a vote taken by UNHCR members this month.

The meeting takes place against a backdrop of a report from UNHCR Chief Navaneetham Pillay who has called for an independent international investigation against Sri Lanka on alleged human rights abuses and accountability issues. The Sri Lankan Government has totally rejected this proposal and has stressed that the report is biased.

The British Government has stated that the US sponsored resolution which maybe co-sponsored by U.K. will call for an independent international investigation into alleged human rights abuses in Sri Lanka and will go further than the past two resolutions on Sri Lanka adopted by the Human Rights Council. Britain is seeking support from member states of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to get the resolution against Sri Lanka passed at the upcoming session in Geneva, a senior minister of the UK government had remarked.

US Secretary of State John Kerry has stated that the US is keen on the resolution on Sri Lanka to be presented at the March session of the UN Human Rights Council. According to Kerry the Sri Lankan government still has not answered basic demands for accountability and reconciliation, where attacks on civil society activists, journalists, and religious minorities had taken place.

India has not yet spelled out its stand on the proposed resolution although it voted for last year's resolution. Meanwhile, India's Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh has told the Indian media that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will meet and hold talks with Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Myanmar early this month. Japan is likely to abstain from the voting. President Mahinda Rajapaksa has played down the proposed resolution. Speaking at an event recently the President said that countries like Cuba had faced so many resolutions and were yet not shaken while Sri Lanka is facing just three resolutions.

Speaking to foreign correspondents, President Rajapakse accused Washington of treating Colombo like "Cassius Clay (Muhammad Ali) using a little boy as a punching bag".

One Million Babies Die Globally on the First Day of Their Life, says Save the Children

The first 24 hours of a child's life are the most dangerous, with more than one million babies dying each year on their first and only day of life, according to new research published on Feb 24 by Save the Children.

The new report, "Ending Newborn Deaths," shows one half of first day deaths around the world could be prevented if the mother and baby had access to free health care and a skilled midwife. Learn More.

The children's aid agency says the deaths happen because of premature birth and complications during birth, such as prolonged labor, pre-eclampsia and infection, which can be avoided if quality health experts are present.

The research also found an additional 1.2 million babies are stillborn each year, their heartbeats stopping during labor because of childbirth complications, maternal infections and hypertension.

In a bid to save millions of newborn lives, Save the Children has called on world leaders to commit in 2014 to a blueprint for change – The Five Point Newborn Promise – which focuses on training and equipping enough skilled health workers to make sure no baby is born without proper help, and removing fees for all pregnancy and birth services.

The world has made amazing progress in reducing child mortality during the past decade – nearly halved from 12 million to 6.6 million – thanks to global political action on immunisation, treatment of pneumonia, diarrhoea, and malaria, family planning and nutrition.

But this progress could stall without urgent action to tackle scandalously high numbers of newborns dying. This report warns that newborn deaths now account for nearly half of all under-five deaths.

Carolyn Miles, President and CEO of Save the Children, said:

"The first day of a child's life is the most dangerous, and too many mothers give birth alone on the floor of their home or in the bush without any life-saving help. We hear horror stories of mothers walking for hours during labor to find trained help, all too often ending in tragedy.

"It's criminal that many of these deaths could be averted simply if there was someone on hand to make sure the birth took place safely and who knew what to do in a crisis."

Each year, 40 million women give birth without trained help. In Ethiopia, only 10 percent of births have skilled help whereas in some areas of rural Afghanistan there is just one midwife for 10,000 people.

In countries such as the Democratic



Republic of Congo (DRC) or the Central African Republic (CAR), some mothers have to pay for emergency maternal care, often costing as much as their monthly food bill.

There have even been reports of mothers being kept under jail-like conditions for months until they have been able to pay for their emergency caesarean.

Carolyn Miles added: "These new statistics reveal – for the first time ever – the true scale of the newborn crisis. The solutions are well-known but need greater political will to give babies a fighting chance of reaching their second day of life. Without targeted action now, progress made in cutting child mortality through vaccines and tackling malnutrition will stall."

Save the Children is calling on world leaders, philanthropists and the private sector to meet and commit to the Five Point Newborn Promise in 2014:

- Issue a defining and accountable declaration to end all preventable newborn mortality, saving 2 million newborn lives a year and stopping the 1.2 million stillbirths during labor

- Ensure that by 2025 every birth is attended by trained and equipped health workers who can deliver essential newborn health interventions

- Increase expenditure on health to at least the WHO minimum of US\$60 per person

- To pay for the training, equipping and support of health workers, and remove user fees for all maternal, newborn and child health services, including emergency obstetric care

- The private sector, including pharmaceutical companies, should help address unmet needs by developing innovative solutions and increasing availability for the poorest to new and existing products for maternal, newborn and child health.

- via savethechildren.org



Occupational Exposures: Is Your Workplace Making You Sick?



By: Jeavana
Sritharan,
BHSc, MHSc,
PhD Student

Exposures in the workplace are known as occupational exposures and may contribute to increased risks of illness or injury. The exposures can be specific to job duties or settings and can range from low to high. It is important to consider your own workplace and identify if there are any potential hazards that may be affecting your health.

Each type of occupation can impose different exposures and these may overlap with other occupations as exposures can come from a variety of sources like chemicals, dust, metals, and other toxins.

Why are occupational exposures important? Because workers are exposed for long periods of time every day to the same types of exposures which means workers may be exposed at much higher levels than residential or community areas. This would increase the risk for different health conditions among workers when compared to the general population.

Important factors to consider with occupational exposures are:

Duration of exposure

Possibility of absorption by the body when exposed

The combined effects that multiple exposures can cause

These three factors provide information on how long a worker is exposed within employment, the method in which the body takes up the agent or exposure, and the possibility of a combination of exposures and the combined effect that these exposures may have on the body.

Exposure Pathways

When the human body comes into contact with potential harmful agents or exposures, this may increase the possibility of adverse health effects. The most common route of exposure for humans is through inhalation however exposure can also occur by ingestion or dermal uptake. This means that certain agents can be breathed in through our nose and mouth, present in our food and water, or absorbed through our skin.

The risk levels for workers depend on the length and concentration of exposures, the exposure itself, other potential risk factors, and the individual's susceptibility. These elements cause variation

among groups of workers. When there is a noticeable increase with a specific health condition within a group of workers, this can result in investigation by work and safety boards to identify if the risk is an occupational exposure.

Major health risks from occupational exposures can be acute or chronic poisoning, airway diseases, cancers, infections, reproductive and developmental conditions, hypersensitivity, and other potential conditions.

This is where research comes into play. Researchers have focused on looking at what agents are known to cause specific health conditions and what occupational agents may still be affecting human health. For example, a well-known oc-



cupational human carcinogen is asbestos but this carcinogen may not be commonly recognized in workplaces or communities.

Asbestos was widely popular in the 19th century because of its physical properties that made it affordable and effective for use by manufacturers and builders. Over time, studies began to show that occupationally exposed individuals showed serious health problems like mesothelioma and other lung conditions. The findings were replicated among residents who lived near asbestos factories or mining areas. Using high concentrations of asbestos for long periods of time can be very detrimental to health. Asbestos fibres are generally inhaled and these fibres can be transferred from clothing or surroundings to other proximal members. What is even more concerning is that those who are smokers and have exposure to asbestos are at an even higher risk of lung cancer when compared to non-smokers.

Canada had only two asbestos mines left in Quebec which created controversy

among work and safety groups. However, in 2011, these two mines stopped operations making reductions in supporting asbestos mining. Much of Canada's asbestos was exported to other nations who could use this material as it was cheap and cost-efficient. India is a nation that uses the asbestos material for buildings in various locations. This not only contributes to exposures among Indian communities but also is not supported by many other nations that follow the scientific evidence on asbestos and health effects.

Exposure Examples

There are multiple exposures in most occupational settings but there are common examples that may help to look at



and routine changes. An increase in work injuries leads to increased injury claims leading to higher costs. Realistically, shift work is practical for many workplaces depending on the type of work required. But as the number of workers take on shift work, it is important to understand the possible risks associated with shift work.

Cancer Risk

There are almost 60 occupational exposures that have been listed as definite or probable human cancer causing agents. The most common forms of cancer linked to occupational exposures are mesothelioma, lung cancer, leukemia, and bladder cancer. Risks for cancer tend to be associated with more severe and prolonged occupational exposures.



personal exposures in your workplace. Those who work outdoors have a higher risk of developing skin conditions like skin cancer due to the long duration of time spent outdoors. Hairdressers or barbers who work with hair dyes, hair and face products daily have a higher risk of skin irritation, respiratory conditions, and even bladder cancer. Transportation workers, like mechanics or those employed at gas stations, are constantly inhaling diesel exhaust fumes and other pollutants which can act as carcinogens. Laboratory or toxicology related workers can be exposed to more chemical compounds simultaneously. Workers employed in factories related to manufacturing, construction, and other related industries tend to have multiple exposures involving different compounds.

Shift Work

Workplace injuries may be increased with those in shift work involving night or rotating shifts. There has been an increase in shift workers and this type of work can disrupt daily activities like sleep patterns leading to more fatigue

Always be aware of the type of hazards involved within your occupation, whether physical, biological, chemical, or other. Understand what your job duties entail and what the potential hazards are as you will be exposed daily. Use the available resources to understand exposures to improve work practices and personal protection. Employers have personal protection for employees and it is your job to thoroughly understand the standards for protection available. We often forget how much time we spend within our workplaces and we often do not acknowledge occupational exposures or connect occupational settings to health conditions. Understanding the exposures is the first step to identifying potential health impacts.

Jeavana Sritharan is a PhD Student in Medical Science at the University of Toronto. She is currently working with Cancer Care Ontario with the Occupational Cancer Research Centre and is the Co-Founder of the webpage, Health Perspectives. Contact email: info@healthperspectives.ca



Regional cardiovascular rehabilitation service expands with three new community sites in Durham

Ribbon-cutting event held to celebrate improved access for patients

Patients in Durham Region will now have greater access to the regional cardiovascular rehabilitation and secondary prevention service thanks to the addition of three new sites in Ajax, Whitby and Oshawa.

Cardiovascular rehabilitation is a supervised service that helps to improve the health of patients who have established vascular disease; have had a cardiac procedure, such as a bypass or angioplasty; or who are at high risk of developing a cardiovascular disease. The Central East Regional Cardiac Care Program offers a leading, six-month cardiovascular rehab and secondary prevention service for patients in Scarborough and Durham through a partnership between Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) and Lakeridge Health. This service is offered at no charge to patients, and includes supervised exercise plans that are individualized for each patient, along with education classes, counseling and support.

"Cardiovascular secondary preventative services are the standard of care for all patients with established vascular disease — including not just heart disease, but heart failure, stroke, chronic kidney disease, peripheral vascular disease and complicated diabetics as well," explains Dr. Joe Ricci, medical manager of the regional cardiovascular rehabilitation program, and medical director of the cardiac care program at RVHS. "Studies have shown that cardiovascular rehabilitation can reduce death rates by 20 to 30 per cent, and reduce the number of people who need to be hospitalized also by 20 to 30 per cent."

More locations means easier access to services

Since July 2011, the regional service has more than doubled, adding three new sites with more in discussion. The expansion of the program has been made possible thanks to funding by the Central East Local Health Integration Network.

There are now seven regional cardiovascular rehab sites across Scarborough and Durham Region:

- Scarborough – Rouge Valley Centenary, 2867 Ellesmere Road
- Ajax – Ajax Community Centre, 75 Centennial Road (new)
- Whitby – Abilities Centre, 55 Gordon Street (new)
- Oshawa – Oshawa Civic Complex, 99 Thornton Road South; Oshawa Legends Centre, 1661 Harmony Road North (new)
- Bowmanville – Bowmanville Indoor Soccer Complex, 2375 Baseline Road West
- Port Perry – Scugog Community Rec-

reation Centre, 1655 Reach Street

"We know that distance is a barrier to access, so multiple sites make it easier for those who really need this service to participate. By making services more accessible, we can help to improve the outcomes for our patients," says Dr. Ricci. "No matter where the patient is, they have the same access to secondary preventative service as anyone else in the region. They are receiving the same quality of care."

More than 2,200 patients already receive this care each year. The goal is to continue expanding in order to serve the 5,000 patients in Scarborough and Durham estimated to need this life-saving service.

Services are standardized across all sites, with Rouge Valley Centenary serving as the central hub for booking and administration. To participate in the regional cardiovascular rehab at one of the sites, a physician completes the standardized referral form, which can be faxed to 416-281-7280.

Celebration Event

To celebrate the expansion of services, the Central East Regional Cardiac Care Program held ribbon-cutting events for the new regional cardiovascular rehab sites. The first of these events took place on Thursday, Feb. 27 at 10 a.m. at the Ajax Community Centre (75 Centennial Rd, Ajax). In addition to a ribbon cutting, the event also served as an opportunity to thank municipal, regional and community stakeholders and supporters who have helped to bring this life-changing service to west Durham. Following the ribbon cutting, a reception also took place and served as an opportunity to see a cardiovascular rehab class in action.

About the Central East Regional Cardiac Care Program

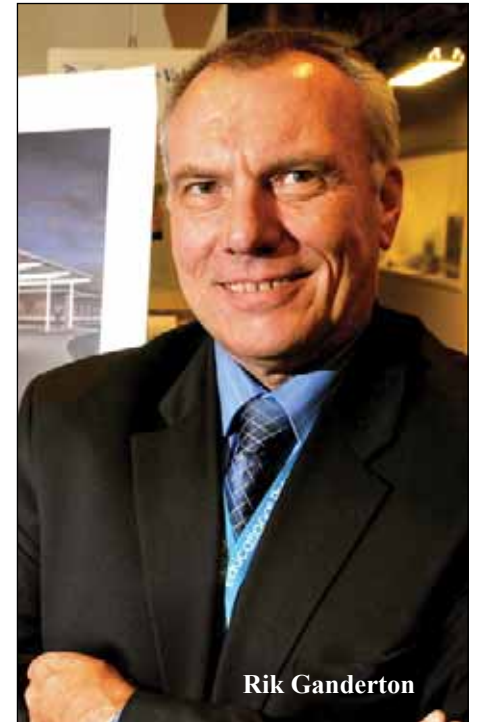
The Central East Regional Cardiac Care Program consists of a highly qualified and experienced team of more than 20 cardiologists and over 100 health professionals, who serve the communities of the Scarborough-Durham area. The regional program delivers a wide range of cardiac services, including life-saving cardiac catheterization and intervention procedures; arrhythmia studies (irregular heartbeat) and management; and cardiovascular rehabilitation and education. Rouge Valley Health System is the designated cardiac care centre for the regional program, delivering care in partnership with The Scarborough Hospital, Lakeridge Health, and the Central East Local Health Integration Network.

Rouge Valley CEO to stay on for interim period

Joan M. Wideman, chair of the Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) Board of Directors, is pleased to announce that Rik Ganderton has agreed to assume the role of interim president and chief executive officer for the period of Jan. 31 to June 27, 2014.

"The RVHS Board is pleased that Rik has agreed to lead us through the ongoing merger discussions and the due diligence process with The Scarborough Hospital. This brings stability and continuity to leadership at RVHS during this period," says Wideman.

Rik Ganderton, who has been president and CEO of RVHS since 2007, says, "I look forward to continuing to work with our partners during this process. We will continue to be relentlessly focused on quality patient care and constant improvement of our services."



Rik Ganderton

Annual event helps ease kids' hospital fears

Rouge Valley Centenary hosts March Break Teddy Bear Clinic

A free March Break event, which invites children to bring their favourite stuffed animals, will help to remove some of the fear and anxiety that many of them may experience when they go to the hospital.

The second annual Teddy Bear Clinic, taking place on Tuesday, March 11 at Rouge Valley Centenary (RVC), and hosted by the hospital's paediatrics program, allows children to learn the ins and outs of the hospital, in a friendly, non-threatening manner. Children are invited to bring their favourite stuffed animal to Rouge Valley Centenary for a 'checkup' during this free event. Kids will take their stuffed animals to meet health care professionals and volunteers, while their beloved toys receive x-rays, blood tests, surgery and more.

"While visiting the hospital can be a difficult experience for anyone -- especially during an emergency -- for a child, it can cause a lot of anxiety and fear," explains Alexandra Frankel, child life specialist for Rouge Valley's paediatrics program. "Our goal with this event is to help take some of the fear out of visiting the hospital. By using their stuffed animal as a 'patient', the Teddy Bear Clinic becomes a chance for children to learn more about the different areas of the hospital in a fun, friendly and relaxed environment."

The event, which is open to all children between ages three and 10, will be held in conjunction with Child Life Month, which is celebrated throughout March. The Teddy Bear Clinic takes

place at RVC, 2867 Ellesmere Road in Scarborough, on March 11 from 1 to 4 p.m. in the Dr. Bruce Johnston Conference Room, located on the third floor.

Spaces are limited. For more details and to register online for the event, visit www.rougevalley.ca/teddybearclinic. You may also contact Alexandra Frankel, child life specialist, Rouge Valley Health System, at 416-284-8131 ext. 4091, or by email at afrankel@rougevalley.ca. Parents are asked to remain present with the child throughout the event.

Paediatrics at Rouge Valley Health System

Rouge Valley Health System specializes in child and adolescent health care. Paediatric care is offered at both hospital campuses, ensuring that children in east Toronto and west Durham have access to quality care that is close to home. Rouge Valley features a range of paediatrics services, including; special care for newborns; paediatric subspecialty clinics including gastroenterology, diabetes, nephrology, rheumatology, hematology and Sickle Cell and neonatal follow-up; a paediatric day surgery program; a paediatric oncology satellite clinic, run in partnership with the Hospital for Sick Children; the Toronto Preschool Speech and Language services; and the Shoniker Clinic, specializing in the assessment and treatment services for young people with significant mental health challenges. To learn more about Rouge Valley's paediatrics services, visit www.rougevalley.ca/paediatrics.



Family first at annual walkathon

On Family Day, Feb. 17, 2014, the generous members of the Scarborough Muslim Community and the Save Family Values groups once again walked to support excellence in local health care, by holding their second-annual walkathon in support of patient care at Rouge Valley Centenary hospital.

The annual Family Day Walkathon took place at the Scarborough Civic Centre and organizers were excited to once again bring so many people together, over 100 people of all ages, to walk and enjoy family time, while supporting their community hospital.



Family Day Walkathon Feb 2014



Family Day Walkathon Feb 2014



L to R, Toronto Councillor Raymond Cho, Yousaf Badat and Imram Ali Khan take part in the walkathon at Scarborough Civic Centre.



Ayaan Akhtar, 6 leads the group in the walkathon at Scarborough Civic Centre.

Marking 60 years of hospital care at Ajax and Pickering

It was a fabulous 60th celebration as many gathered to celebrate Rouge Valley Ajax and Pickering's 60th anniversary on February 25.

Guest speaker RVHS Board Chair Joan Wideman thanked staff, physicians, midwives and auxiliary members for their contributions over the course of six decades. Displays by the Town of Ajax featured rare artifacts documenting the hospital's history, and the auxiliary volunteers photo albums and memory collections were a popular attraction.

Some special guests in attendance included members of the RVHS Board

of Directors, Foundation Board Chair Judith Barker, and former Ajax and Pickering General Hospital CEO Ken MacInnes.



RVHS Board Chair Joan Wideman recognized some of the special guests, including Faith Mariano representing the Auxiliary to RVAP





It's that time of year again... Providence Healthcare Foundation is gearing up for our **14th annual Cuisine & Cuvée**

WHEN: Friday, May 2, 2014
TIME: 6:30pm — midnight
WHERE: Atlantis Pavilions, 955 Lake Shore Blvd West
Dress: Cocktail Attire
Ticket Price: \$175 (all-inclusive)
BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE at www.providence.on.ca

Come experience “the finer things in life” and enjoy an amazing night at Cuisine & Cuvée on Friday, May 2.

For \$175 per ticket, you and any of your friends or family can enjoy unlimited food and drinks all night long! This is no stuffy sit down dinner. Guests mix and mingle while sampling station after station of delicious foods paired with an array of flavourful wines and spirits.

Our goal is to raise \$175,000 (net) and we need your help to get there.

So raise a glass to Providence Healthcare and come join us for an evening you won't forget!

The Main Event begins at 6:30p.m., but the fun continues past midnight with an *After Party* that includes a fabulous new sampling of food and beverages perfect for late-night dining.

Great New Venue to Experience

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Generous, community-minded culinary experts, vineyards, and distilleries will come together under one roof to delight your taste buds. Over 20 stations await you!

Here are just some of the amazing *cuisine* providers that will tempt your taste buds at this year's Cuisine & Cuvée:

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- Jawny Bakers
- KakeKreations
- Nush Nosh
- Marek Hospitality
- Brooklyn Tavern
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- Pizzeria Libretto
- Steam Whistle Brewery
- 13th Street Winery
- Pravda Vodka
- Henry of Pelham
- Boehmer
- Ice Volcano

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To learn more, contact Brianna Szarka at (416) 285-3666 x5025 or bszarka@providence.on.ca.

Visit us online at www.providence.on.ca.



Adult Day Program for People with Dementia Extends Hours for Weekend Care



Providence Healthcare has extended the hours of its adult day program for people with dementia to be open Saturdays until 11 p.m. and Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. This is in addition to its regular 24 hour service Mondays through Fridays.

“Managing time can be especially difficult for family caregivers of people with an irreversible dementia,” says Elizabeth Davison, manager for the adult day program. “Being able to be open additional hours on weekends is helpful for our clients’ families, giving them time to run errands, go to appointments, shop or simply to have a rest while knowing their loved one is somewhere safe.”

The extended hours will be appreciated by people like Toronto resident Linda Drown, a caregiver whose husband Daniel uses the program a couple of times a week. “When I heard about the program at Providence, it came highly recommended,” explains Drown. “I could relax when Dan was here. I knew he was well looked after. I knew for that period of time I could do things to look after my own health.”

Funding for the additional hours of operation comes as part of the Ontario government's \$260 million increase in supports to programs across the province that help seniors and their families get the right care, in the right place, at the right time, announced at Providence Healthcare on January 29 by Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews.

“At the core of our health care transformation effort — and our Senior's Strategy — is a shift from care in institutions like hospitals and long-term care homes to care at home and in community settings,” says Matthews. “That's because it's what people want, and it's less costly. Our government is investing any scarce new health dollars to support our seniors at home — for initiatives like the adult day program at Providence Healthcare.”

“Right now, we serve about 150 different clients weekly and more than 300 a year,” says Davison. “We make sure our members take part in a range of activities when they visit — from singing and

dancing to games, baking and even the occasional spa days.”

A welcoming, home-like feel prevails in Providence's adult day program with its chandeliers, piano, gardens, den, living and dining rooms, and a kitchen that turns out delicious baked goods, many of them prepared with the help of clients. Clients, known as ‘club members’, can choose to participate in the abundant therapeutic activities that are offered, enjoy independent activities and/or safely and freely walk throughout the large space.

Divided into clubs —lunch club runs from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m., dinner club from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. and breakfast club is overnight with hours from 7 p.m. until 9 a.m. the next morning — clients can attend up to three clubs per week. Flexible hours allow clients to carry over into other clubs.

Anyone living in the community with some form of memory loss is eligible for Providence's adult day program. Similarly, anyone can make a referral. For a nominal fee, club members receive a hot meal along with up to 10 hours of care.

“A combination assessment and trial visit is required prior to starting so that we may provide the best possible care for our club members,” adds Davison.

In addition to client care, caregivers themselves have access to and can benefit from Providence Healthcare's Scotiabank Learning Centre, offering free caregiver education, support and resources.

“I started to come to the support group that's professionally facilitated and it's been wonderful for me,” says Drown. “When Dan and I come here, we get to be with other people who are in the same situation and that's not always true in our everyday lives. So it's a place for us to relax and to strategize for me and benefit from other people in the same situation.”

“It's crucial in terms of us being able to maintain our own health and the health of our family. So I see it as being very important for helping us to be at home together for as long as possible.”

For more information on Providence Healthcare's adult day program or to book a tour, phone 416-285-3803.

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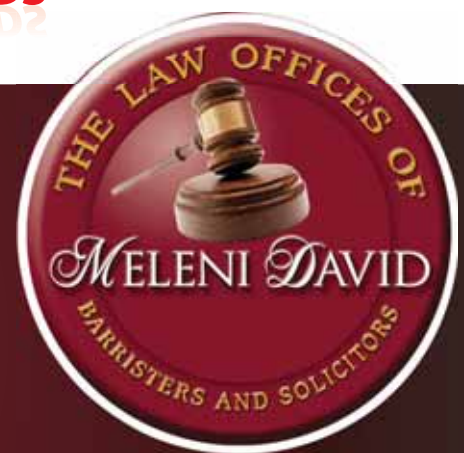
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Polypharmacy, Pseudodisease and Pharmacists' Scope of Practice

Too Many Medicines, Too Few Concrete Diagnoses, and the Lack of Oversight



by Richard Jeyaranjan, MD, PhD, FRCPC

In today's medical practice, just like in any field of practice, there are bound to be excesses and negligences. Unlike in other fields, in Medicine, patients' life is what is at stake. It is perhaps an ironic coincidence that Polypharmacy, Pseudodisease, and Pharmacists' Scope of Practice were the subjects of separate articles in a recent issue of Canadian Medical Association Journal. While these were independently written by authors whose views and facts are fully valid, I feel compelled to raise the notion that these three entities are highly interrelated and inseparable in day to day medical practice. In fact, these interrelationships and intertwining are the bases of evolution of many medically complex patients most of whom I believe have pseudodiseases, are subject to polypharmacy, and, unfortunately, are at the mercy of the extending scope of practice of their pharmacists.

Polypharmacy is where a patient is given multiple medications with considerable overlap in their intended effects and side effects with escalating costs to the patient and the system. Some of these medications may be lacking the indication for their use. Pseudodisease is a diagnosis that a patient may not yet have reached the criteria for its treatment, may not even have an early stage of it at the time of treatment, or may never develop. The pharmacists' scope of practice involves their capabilities and recent expansion of their responsibilities. They are able to renew medications, inject flu shots, and even substitute treatments, all without clinically examining their patients and reviewing their laboratory tests. A patient becomes medically complex when they are diagnosed with and treated for multiple medical problems especially those that last their entire lifetime and are having financial, social, and treatment complications. Having clarified the definitions of the terms, I will now elaborate on some of the details below.

Patients are often referred to organ-based or symptom-based sub-specialists even without appropriate indications. Most of them are then diagnosed with diseases which the sub-specialist specializes in sometimes without meeting any

clear-cut criteria for such diagnoses and at other times ostensibly based on findings during tests using equipment that the sub-specialists received training on. Once diagnosed, at least some of them are then treated with medications established as treatments for these conditions. The cycle repeats as the patient presents to the primary care providers with additional symptoms and/or findings. This sequence of events may sound as a cynical view, but those who understand the principles of economics in a fee-for-service system of physician remuneration will only be limited by their imagination.

As the process repeats, the patients is gradually accumulating additional treatments most of which often go unchecked and unmonitored. A primary care provider who should be the gate-keeper with skills and knowledge to prevent drug interactions, polypharmacy, and inefficiency often becomes a spectator of the process. A pharmacist with computerized drug interaction databases and calculators should be able to detect even the most subtle interaction, but he or she lacks the training to detect pseudodisease, wrong indications for a treatment, and sometimes even the correct scheduling of treatments. There can also be conflicts of interests in spite of competency,

but these should not trump advocacy for patients. While this is probably the only measure presently available in our system to keep at least some overseeing, the status quo is unacceptable in my opinion.

With computer processor and storage capacities leaping ahead in an unprecedented pace, there can certainly be a way for every medical office or practitioner to have instant access of the vast electronic libraries of medicine with abilities to check diagnoses, drug interactions, indications and contraindications, or even simulate patient encounters. I do not think delegating one's own obligations to another party is ethical or legal. A healthcare provider needs to function only in the best interests of our patients, with whatever resources available, which would in turn curb the spread of polypharmacy, pseudodisease and medical complexity of patients.

Jury Out on Vitamins' Use Against Heart Disease, Cancer

There is not enough scientific evidence to recommend that people take multivitamins or other nutritional supplements to prevent cancer or heart disease, according to a U.S. government-backed health panel.

The final recommendations, published on Feb 24th in the Annals of Internal Medicine, largely mirror draft guidelines that were released by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) in November.

They do not apply to people with known vitamin deficiencies or chronic illnesses.

"Because so much money is spent and so many people think they're doing themselves good by taking multivitamins, we really do need research to find out if that is the case," said Dr. Virginia Moyer, who chairs the USPSTF.

Moyer is also the vice president for maintenance of certification and quality at the American Board of Pediatrics in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

While generally calling for more research on vitamins, the USPSTF concluded there is enough evidence that beta-carotene increases the risk of lung cancer among those who are already more likely to develop it, such as smokers.

After reviewing six trials, researchers who compiled a summary of available evidence for the panel found there were few or no harms linked to taking vitamin E, but it also did not reduce the risk of heart disease or cancer.

The new recommendations represent a call for additional research - especially research that takes into account the nuances of nutrition, said Duffy MacKay, senior vice president for scientific and regulatory affairs at the Council for Responsible Nutrition. The Washington-



based trade association represents dietary supplement manufacturers and ingredient suppliers.

For example, MacKay said, it is difficult to compare the effectiveness of multivitamins or nutrients in trials similar to those that evaluate traditional drugs, because all people usually get some of the vitamins or nutrients through their diet.

His organization has compiled research that shows there are meaningful nutrient gaps in the general population.

"A significant portion of Americans are falling short in essential nutrients," MacKay told Reuters Health. "Most Americans will benefit from a multivitamin as an insurance policy."

Moyer said the USPSTF re-evaluates recommendations about every five years, but there are some exceptions if a topic is prioritized.

In general, she said people should be getting the vitamins and nutrients they need from their diet.

"It's probably not the individual vitamins or minerals or anything else," she said. "It's what you get from the whole of a balanced diet."

- Reuters-via VOA News

Study Links Older Dads to Kids' Psychiatric Problems

A new study links older fathers with higher risks for having children with psychiatric problems including bipolar disorder, autism and attention deficits.

JAMA Psychiatry, a journal of the American Medical Association, released the findings the week of Feb 24 from American and Swedish researchers who examined data on more than two million Swedes born from 1973-2001.

Children fathered by men at age 45 and older faced risks for bipolar disorder almost 25 times greater than children whose dads were ages 20-24 at the time of their birth. The risk was 13 times greater for ADHD and more than three times greater for autism.

Older paternal age also more than doubled a child's likelihood for suicide



attempts, schizophrenia and substance abuse.

The results add to evidence that DNA mutations can happen over time in men, but they do not prove that children of older dads are certain to have psychiatric problems. The risks for problems were greater, but still small. Less than one percent of kids of older dads had autism, ADHD or bipolar disorder.

- VOA News



COMMIT TO GET FIT – KICK IT WITH SEY

According to Seymour (Sey) Creighton, 8th Degree Black Belt in Taekwon-Do and fitness instructor at The Scarborough Hospital (TSH), you can either sit in traffic for an hour or use that time to fit fitness into your day.

“Having a gym at the hospital and a variety of classes is so convenient,” says Sey. “It gives you the opportunity to get your workout done instead of going home and going back out. That’s when people often skip it, because they’re too tired once they sit down.”

Sey has been teaching kickboxing at TSH for about three years, and takes pride in how much his regular students have improved their coordination and skills since first joining the class.

“I love what I’ve seen,” says Sey. “They’re making steady changes, able to better keep up and becoming stronger.”

The class, which is 45 minutes every Thursday at 3:45 p.m., doesn’t require the use many weights. Rather, it focuses on resistive training that targets specific areas such as the legs, shoulders and core.

“It’s a total body workout,” says Sey. There is also a lot of stretching involved to achieve long, lean muscles and he recommends the class for those looking for a dynamic workout that is also ‘amazing fun.’

“You ARE going to get a good workout,” emphasizes Sey. “Everyone enjoys the program. It’s about you, so we make it for you.”

Sey’s passion and talent for martial arts has taken him all over the world – from Korea to Japan, Greece to Germany and more. He owns his own gym, Creighton’s Taekwon-Do, and is also a certified boxing coach. All this experience he brings to TSH because, “it’s inspiring to see others enjoy what you do.”

He adds that he’s met some really great people at TSH and is proud to be part of a fitness team that offers so many great workouts for all different types of people.

“Everyone should indulge in the great gym and amazing fitness classes offered here at TSH,” says Sey.



Sey Creighton teaches kickboxing to TSH staff, such as Jacqueline Abel (pictured), every Thursday afternoon.

A SPECIAL DONATION FROM A VERY SPECIAL GIRL



Lisa and Maddie Clarke

There’s a very simple reason 11-year-old Maddie Clarke worked so hard last summer to raise over \$200 for The Scarborough Hospital Foundation.

“I wanted to raise money so that no one had to feel how I felt when my Grandma passed away from cancer,” Maddie explains in a quiet voice.

Maddie’s maternal grandmother died on December 27, 2012. Although she was able to pass away at home, she received cancer treatment and palliative care at The Scarborough Hospital’s General campus.

“My father passed away from cancer too when Maddie was only five months old,” adds Maddie’s mom Lisa. “He was at the General campus too and also passed away at home. The palliative care services at The Scarborough Hospital were very helpful for both my parents.”

In addition to the care her parents received, Lisa was born at the General campus (back when it was Scarborough General Hospital) and both Maddie and her 12-year-old brother were born at the hospital.

Last June, Maddie asked Lisa if she could do something to raise money in honour of her

Grandma’s birthday on August 26. Maddie decided to make “parachute cord”-style bracelets and sell them for five dollars each.

After about a month of production, Maddie and Lisa began selling the bracelets through Lisa’s Facebook and Instagram accounts. “A lot of my girlfriends, our family friends and friends from Maddie’s hockey team started making orders,” says Lisa.

On August 26, Maddie and Lisa proudly walked into the Foundation offices and dropped off a \$220 donation.

But this isn’t the first - or last - fundraising campaign for this budding philanthropist. Last year, Maddie also cut off 11 inches of her hair and donated it to “Locks of Love” to help children who have lost their hair due to cancer treatments.

“And she just told me a few weeks ago that she wants to do something else for charity, although she hasn’t decided what yet,” says Lisa.

When asked what makes her so generous, Maddie’s answer goes back to her Grandma. “It’s just that I miss her and I don’t want anyone else to feel like that.”

REMEMBERING JILLIAN: STUFF PANDA BEARS BRING SMILES TO CHILDREN’S FACES

Ten stuffed pandas made their way into the arms and hearts of children at The Scarborough Hospital’s pediatric unit in February in memory of a baby girl who passed away 11 years ago.

Jillian Dawn Elise Babin was only seven-and-a-half weeks old when she died. But to her mother, Karen, Jillian will forever be remembered as a strong little girl who fought hard throughout her short life.

“It was a high risk pregnancy, and everything went alright,” recalls Karen. “We attended several follow-up appointments, but one day, Jillian started crying, and wouldn’t stop. I took her into The Scarborough Hospital to see her paediatrician, who called in a cardiologist. We went home that night, and she got worse, so I took her back to the hospital. Staff did everything they could for her – running from floor to floor to find equipment that would fit her tiny body. They were

absolutely phenomenal. But she died the next day.”

The autopsy discovered Jillian had primary pulmonary hypertension – rare, fatal and extremely difficult to diagnose, especially in babies.

“Every Christmas since Jillian passed away, my Mom would donate money to different charities in her honour,” Karen says. “One day, I found these beautiful little stuffed panda bears. They were \$5 each, and \$1 from each purchase is donated to Children’s Miracle Network. So I thought, why not buy ten of them and hand them out to children at the hospital’s pediatric unit? They can put a smile on the face of a child who is having a rotten time being stuck in a hospital over the holidays.”

Karen and her mother, Bette-Jean Hudson, made arrangements to do just that, but the ice storm in December delayed their plans. On February 7, Karen and Bette-

Jean distributed the panda bears to children at TSH’s pediatric unit.

“We wanted to ‘pay it forward,’ and I believe Jillian is looking down on us and is happy that we’re helping other kids,” Karen says, who was also born at TSH. “She had a tough ordeal, but she was a strong little girl, and I’m so glad that we were able to have her in our lives as long as we did.”

Baby Willow Comisso receives a stuffed panda while she and her Mom, Jean Capano, recently visited the pediatric unit at the General campus of The Scarborough Hospital. Handing out the panda bears in memory of her daughter, Jillian Dawn Elise Babin, Karen Babin (standing, centre) and her mother, Bette-Jean Hudson (standing, left) and Registered Nurse Judy Dawson.



YOU'RE INVITED TO JOIN TELEPHONE A TOWN HALLS ON PROPOSED HOSPITAL MERGER

The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) and Rouge Valley Health System (RVHS) invite you to join a telephone town hall that will provide an update on the proposed merger and ask for community input. The telephone town hall will take place on

Wednesday, March 5 at 7:05 p.m.

To ensure that you can join the call, you must pre-register for the telephone town halls by leaving your name and phone number at the Leading for Patients website: www.leadingforpatients.ca

Those who pre-register will receive a phone call that will connect them to a telephone town hall conversation.

This phone technology can accommodate thousands of participants.

A total of 16,000 community residents joined the two telephone town halls held in the fall of 2013, providing their valuable viewpoints and asking questions of hospital leaders.

"Our hospitals are working closely together with a focus on improving health care and putting patients first," said Rik Ganderton, President and CEO, RVHS. "Telephone town halls give us great opportunities to hear from as many residents as possible."

"Throughout this process, we have remained committed to an open and transparent process by engaging our community," says Robert Biron, President and CEO, TSH. "We encourage everyone to participate – their views are valued and important to us."

Both CEOs will be joined by RVHS Chief of Staff Dr. Naresh Mohan and TSH Chief of Staff Dr. Tom Chan on the telephone town halls.

Questions will be asked of you by the call hosts in order to document your views. You can respond to questions by pressing a number on your dial pad. You can also ask questions of hospital leaders and make comments.

The benefits of a merged hospital corporation include:

- Improved access to health care services and improved quality, which means:
- More clinical expertise available to residents locally in Scarborough and west Durham;
- Repatriation of patients, who currently receive care outside of our communities, to our local hospitals;
- Ability to attract more specialist doctors for advanced care through the four hospital campuses;
- Improved patient coordination and transitions of care among the hospitals, with community services and in home care;
- More centres of excellence (specialized services) and regional programs in years to come; and;
- Development of ambulatory centres/clinics for same day care.

Benefits of a merger will especially be realized in the longer-term as the hospitals position themselves to better serve their communities, create a shared vision for a transformed local health care system, address fiscal challenges together, and take advantage of the fast changing health care environment.

The new hospital corporation will be more resilient and better positioned to take advantage of the province's new patient-based funding formula, by focusing on increasing both quality and efficiency.

TSH LAUNCHES A HEALTHY NEW LOOK FOR ITS WEBSITE

The Scarborough Hospital (TSH) is pleased to announce A Healthy New Look for www.tsh.to, our new website featuring enhanced content, improved functionality and user-friendly navigation.

The new website has many new features that were designed to:

- Better inform and engage our community
- Meet accessibility standards
- Improve functionality
- Support user-friendly navigation
- Provide detailed information about TSH's programs and services and guidance on how to access those services
- Engage our community, including a new calendar of events to better inform and involve our community in hospital initiatives
- Encourage feedback through an online feedback form, so we can continue to advance the site for our users

"Through consultation with both our internal and external stakeholders, we developed a new website to address the needs of our various users," says Holly-Ann Campbell, Director, Communications and Engagement. "We are excited to present the new online face of our hospital that provides so many enhanced features to ensure our community has access to the information they need and want, right at their fingertips."

TSH would like to thank all stakeholders for their input regarding this project, and we invite and encourage staff, physicians, volunteers and community members to visit the new www.tsh.to and provide feedback through an online survey. Those visiting the new website between February 24 and March 7 will also have a chance to win an iPod. Details are available at www.tsh.to.

TSH WELCOMES INTERNATIONAL TEACHING OPPORTUNITY

The first of two groups of nurses from Hong Kong will arrive on March 17 to participate in an education and clinical observation program developed by The Scarborough Hospital's (TSH) Regional Nephrology Program. The second group arrives at the end of April.

The nurses will each spend about five weeks learning and observing nephrology care delivery and maintenance across the health care system. Some of the learning objectives include advanced concepts and modernized international initiatives in nephrology services; comprehensive service provision in hospital, satellite centres and at home; advanced nursing practice in clinics and hospitals; and patient education strategies from palliative care to different renal replacement therapies.

"Our diverse population allows TSH the unique opportunity to practice 'global medicine' right here at home," says Ethel Doyle, Director, Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Program. "In doing so, our staff and physicians have developed a high degree of understanding of the needs of our Asian population, which comprises about 60 per cent of our community. As we already provide top quality nephrology care, TSH was asked to host these international health care professionals."

TSH is home to the Central East LHIN's Regional Nephrology Program, one of the largest programs in North America. It provides care for more than 6,000 patients living with Chronic Kidney Disease and dialysis to more than 800 patients, both in-hospital and in the community at satellite sites and through community partners. It also supports many patients who receive hemodialysis in the comfort of their own home.

With its expertise in providing care to an Asian population and its existing partnerships with health care organizations in Hong Kong, Mongolia and China, TSH was recommended by the Hospital Authority of Hong Kong as the perfect hospital to host this unique teaching opportunity.

"We are honoured to be chosen for this excellent opportunity to share our knowledge and expertise as well as our passion for the work we do," says Dr. Paul Tam, Medical Director, Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Program. "Our staff developed a full curriculum that will provide these nurses with a great opportunity to gain global perspectives on the provision of nephrology service and evidenced-based practice within and outside of our Nephrology Program."

Weathering the Storm



The Scarborough Hospital recognized the extraordinary contributions of its staff and physicians during December's ice storm as well as the day-to-day work that is carried out at TSH in providing excellent patient care. 'Weathering the Storm' offered mini-massages, free mugs of chocolate and the opportunity to thank colleagues who helped each other with their support through challenging times. Enjoying their mugs are, left to right: Eden Habtesilassie, Rohan Jagasar and Kelly Mortimer from Sterile Processing Department at the Birchmount campus.



ALL-NEW 2015 HYUNDAI GENESIS TO ARRIVE IN CANADIAN MARKET WITH *STANDARD HTRAC ALL-WHEEL DRIVE*



Hyundai recently ushered in a new era for its world-class premium product range with the Canadian debut of the all-new second-generation 2015 Genesis sedan at the 2014 Canadian International Auto Show. With a single-minded focus on delivering the driving and ownership experience expected of the best premium sedans in the world, Hyundai has redesigned the Genesis from the ground up with bold styling, cutting-edge technologies, and exceptional driving dynamics.

Powered by a choice of Gasoline Direct Injection (GDI) V6 or V8 engines, all 2015 Genesis sedans sold in the Canadian market will come standard with Hyundai's all-new HTRAC active all-wheel drive (AWD) system. Performance of the vehicle's all-new platform was validated in some of the world's most demanding driving environments, including Germany's famed Nürburgring Nordschleife racing circuit.

"In developing the all-new Genesis, Hyundai engineers focused relentlessly on the small details that define an authentic, premium experience," said Steve Kelleher, President and CEO of Hyundai Auto Canada Corp. "The result is a sedan that exemplifies Hyundai's world-class expertise in

product development. Confident ride and handling, advanced features, and fine craftsmanship are blended seamlessly to create a special connection from the moment owners approach the car for a drive to the second they put it in park and walk away. It's a holistic experience that's unlike anything Hyundai has accomplished before."

The 2015 Genesis will be built at Hyundai's plant in Ulsan, Korea and pricing will be announced closer to the vehicle's on-sale date in the spring of 2014.

FLUIDIC SCULPTURE 2.0

Originally introduced in 2009, Hyundai's signature "Fluidic Sculpture" design language has since influenced every model in the brand's line-up. The all-new 2015 Genesis is the first Hyundai product to feature the styling theme's second generation, dubbed Fluidic Sculpture 2.0.

DESIGNED TO EMPOWER

The 2015 Genesis features a modern look punctuated by fluidic elements and premium styling cues. The bold hexagonal front grille is tied into a dynamic character line running the length of the car and culminating in the strong rear fenders. Design surfaces convey a kinetic elegance, creating dramatic forms with a focus on voluminous body sections rather than surface details. A long wheelbase, sleek C-pillar, and short overhangs provide a confident stance and classic premium sedan proportions. With a combination of HID and LED exterior lighting, a focus was placed on giving Genesis a striking night-time presence.

HTRAC ALL-WHEEL DRIVE

The 2015 Genesis will be the first Hyundai model to incorporate the brand's all-new HTRAC all-wheel drive (AWD) system, offering consistent all-weather traction while improving the vehicle's dynamic behaviour. The system will be offered at standard equipment on all Genesis models sold in Canada.

V6 AND V8 ENGINES REVISED FOR IMPROVED TORQUE

Genesis will offer a choice of revised 3.8-litre GDI V6 and 5.0-litre GDI V8 engines for 2015. Each receives a series of enhancements aimed at improving low-end torque, driveability, and fuel economy. The V6 and V8 engines produce an estimated 311 and 420 horsepower, respectively.

ALL-NEW PLATFORM

The 2015 Genesis is underpinned by an all-new platform incorporating 38 percent more advanced high

tensile-strength steel than its previous-generation counterpart. Torsional and bending rigidity have been increased by 16 and 40 percent, respectively, surpassing the BMW 5-series in both measures. The structure of the vehicle was engineered to meet the most stringent international government and independent agency safety standards.

WORLD-CLASS CHASSIS FOR EXCEPTIONAL ROAD MANNERS

Building on the vehicle's stiff structure, Hyundai engineers designed all elements of the 2015 Genesis' suspension and steering to deliver world-class ride and handling behaviour. Suspension geometry has been completely revised for improved lateral stiffness, cornering, and stability.

CAREFULLY CRAFTED INTERIOR

Inside the 2015 Genesis, occupants will find a design that's both elegant and intuitive, with all primary controls fully redesigned to maximize ease-of-use. Special attention was paid to the steering wheel, switchgear, and touch points to ensure a high quality feel as well as satisfying tactile responses. System interfaces are intuitively laid out with all controls easy to reach and grouped by function. Rich materials are used throughout the cabin, including textured aluminum, supple leather, and soft micro-suede. For a truly upscale environment, Napa leather and matte-finish genuine wood trim are available.

MODERN PREMIUM FEATURES

To surpass the expectations of premium sedan buyers, the 2015 Genesis offers a comprehensive list of advanced features and technologies. The new Smart Trunk feature provides automatic hands-free actuation of the trunk lid when the vehicle's smart key is detected near the rear bumper for more than three seconds. A full-colour Head-Up Display (HUD) projects useful information including vehicle speed, navigation directions, and driving assistance indicators onto the windshield, allowing drivers to keep their eyes on the road ahead. For convenience and safety, a High-Beam Assist (HBA) function can automatically switch on the vehicle's low beams when an oncoming vehicle is detected.

STATE-OF-THE-ART DRIVER ASSISTANCE AND SAFETY TECHNOLOGIES

A Hyundai-first Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) function uses a forward camera and sensors to detect rapid closing speeds to the vehicle ahead. For increased situational awareness, Genesis offers Blind Spot Detection (BSD), Rear Cross Traffic Alert (RCTA), a Lane Departure Warning System (LDWS), Lane Change Assist (LCA), and a Lane Keeping Assist System (LKAS), the latter two of which are new to Hyundai. In order to help maintain driver alertness, Genesis benefits from an industry-first CO2 sensor control system located under the glove box. It monitors CO2 levels and brings in additional ambient fresh air as required to keep occupants comfortable and alert.

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Hyundai Auto Canada, established in 1983 and headquartered in Markham, Ontario, is a subsidiary of Hyundai Motor Company of Korea. Hyundai vehicles are distributed throughout Canada by Hyundai Auto Canada and are sold and serviced through 210 dealerships nationwide. Learn more at www.HyundaiCanada.com.



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SPEECHSCIENCE: TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR SPEECH AND ACCENT

The way we talk says a lot about us – instantly. Effective, clear communication means we accurately say what we think and feel, and ensures that others appreciate the full value of our ideas. This is crucial when it comes to career,

International which has created powerful, unique speech training programs that boost the clarity and power of speech, eliminate communication barriers, reduce accents and improve self-image.

Bonnie offers three important tips to non-native English speakers to improve their speech:

1. Be Clear: Be understood clearly by correctly pronouncing the sounds
- th - v - w - and r.
2. Have correct rhythm: English words should be spoken with an up and down rhythm for perfect flow- e.g. The word “communicate” should NOT sound like -COM/UN/ I/CATE, but like c/MU/n/cate.
3. Bring flow to your sentences. Stress the words that carry your meaning – and de stress the other words. For example “I’M COMING TO THE MEETING” should be stressed as “im COMING t’ th’ MEETING”.

“While newcomers can use these communication skills to reduce their accent, improve their public speaking and interview skills; speech programs can also empower HR professionals and business owners to help their employees increase productivity and success in their jobs.” Through her specialized communication courses, Bonnie has helped hundreds of people increase their chances of being hired and promoted. For CEOs at the helm, this course

helps them translate their vision into convincing communication that makes a memorable impact.

In the past this type of program can only be taken through private lessons, but now it’s also available online which is both economical and convenient. These online courses include skills measurement, customized lessons with benchmarked goals, live feedback, and voice analysis, with audio, video, and computer tools. Accentsciencesystems.com is one of these courses which helps you reduce your accent online in the privacy of your home.

Make the choice today. Invest in yourself, and if you are a CEO/ Manager invest in your people, with Bonnie Gross the proven expert in communication. To learn more about SpeechScience visit www.SpeechScience.com and to sample their online accent reduction program, visit www.accentsciencsystems.com.

SpeechScience
BONNIE GROSS ASSOCIATES



Bonnie Gross, Speech-Language Pathologist

relationships, and the overall sense of self. As immigrants to Canada, it is natural for us to bring the nuances of our mother tongue to English. In our native countries, the fluency and clarity of our English would be considered good, in Canada, not as much.

“Many immigrants do not have a problem with their knowledge of the English language, but struggle with incorrect pronunciation, choppy words and sentence rhythm or lack of voice projection that may not reflect the way English is spoken in North America. Not only does this prove to be an obstacle in getting hired, promoted and established in business, it also impacts remuneration and salary.” Said Bonnie Gross, renowned Speech-Language Pathologist with over 25 years of experience in speech pathology, voice training, public speaking and accent reduction. She is also the founder of SpeechScience



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SADHGURU:

Yogi and mystic, Sadhguru, lists out four remarkable health benefits of turmeric, and looks at what just a pinch a day of this amazing gift from Mother Nature can do for us.

#1 Purificatory Health Benefits of Turmeric

Sadhguru: Turmeric purifies the blood and brings translucence to your energies. Turmeric not only works on the physiology, but also has a big impact on your energy system. It purifies the blood, body, and energy system. For external purification, just take a small pinch of turmeric, put it into a bucket of water and pour it over your body – you will see, the body will be vibrant and glowing.

#2 Anti-phlegm Health Benefits of Turmeric

Those who suffer from cold related diseases and find their nostrils blocked every morning, will benefit a lot from the



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

#4 Benefits of Turmeric for Yogic Sadhana

Everything you borrow from the earth, including your body, has a certain inertia. It is important to be conscious of this and to keep the inertia levels at the minimum. When we gauge whether your sadhana is working or not by looking at how much you sleep and how alert you are, we are checking how much inertia you generate. The inertia levels will increase if the body does not allow a certain amount of energy to enter the cellular level. Neem and turmeric as a combination dilate the cellular structure of the body in such a way that it allows energy to enter and fill up every crevice. Neem and turmeric are a physical support towards that, but sadhana itself does it too.

You can generate enormous energy by means other than sadhana, such as stimulants – like a strong cup of coffee or nicotine – but it will not dilate the cellu-



consumption of neem, pepper, honey and turmeric. Crush about 10 to 12 peppercorns roughly and soak them in a couple of spoons of honey overnight (about 8 to 12 hours). In the morning you consume this and just chew upon the pepper. Mixing some turmeric with the honey should also work. If you avoid all dairy products, your phlegm will go down naturally.

#3 Anti-cancer Health Benefits of Turmeric

Cancer is not a disease, it's your own body working against you; certain cells have turned against you. Periodic cleansing of the body is good to prevent this from happening. Consumption of turmeric on an empty stomach is a very effective cleanser. This may not be effective after you get cancer, but otherwise, swallowing a marble-sized turmeric ball and neem-ball, first thing in the morning acts as a great cleanser and takes away the cancerous cells in your body.

lar structure and allow the energy to enter the system to be stored and released over a long period of time. When, instead of being stored, energy finds expression right there, it becomes destructive – not only for the body, but also for the mind, for the activity that you perform, and for the world around you. When we generate energy in the body, it is important that it does not simply burst out but that we are able to hold it and release it by choice.

Neem paste

The consumption of neem and turmeric with tepid, light honey water is a wonderful way of cleansing and dilating the cellular structure in such a way that it is able to absorb energy. When you do sadhana, the dilation brings flexibility to the muscles. The flexibility helps you to slowly build the system into a more powerful possibility. You will feel it – as you do your asanas, the body will crackle with a different kind of energy.





Largely White Academy Recognizing Diversity of the Nation is a sign of the Times

(Text of Editorial Appearing in "The Hindu" of March 4th 2014 Under the heading "Sign of the Times")

So many awards are handed out before the Oscars, with strong favourites emerging on the basis of those wins, that the Academy Awards ceremony has today become largely predictable. The same people who garner those earlier awards inevitably end up winning Oscars.

Thus, Matthew McConaughey won Best Actor for Dallas Buyers Club, despite rumours that long-denied Leonardo DiCaprio would pose a threat with his work on The Wolf of Wall Street.

Cate Blanchett was anointed Best Actress for Blue Jasmine, despite worries that her association with this Woody Allen film would prove too scandalous, after the fresh round of sexual abuse charges by Allen's daughter.

As widely predicted on the basis of his win at the Director's Guild of America, Alfonso Cuarón was declared Best Director for Gravity. And 12 Years a Slave won Best Picture, despite predictions of an upset by Gravity.

There was no way a 3-D sci-fi spec-

tacular was going to beat a noble-minded account of slavery in the antebellum South. But despite the lack of surprise, history was made. 12 Years a Slave was the first film made by a black to receive the Academy's highest honour: Best Picture. It was fitting that one of the presenters was Sidney Poitier, America's first black star.

The first instance of the largely white Academy acknowledging the diversity in the nation was when Hattie McDaniel became the first black person to be nominated for an Oscar. (She went on to win, for Gone With the Wind.) And this year, Lupita Nyong'o and John Ridley picked up two major awards for their work on 12 Years a Slave.

Even the traditional address by the president of the Academy for Motion Picture Arts and Sciences upheld this trend, coming as it did from the first black woman to hold the position. And that wasn't all. It is a sign of how far the Academy Awards have come that its 86th edition was hosted by a lesbian. Ellen DeGeneres has hosted earlier, in 2007, but this year she made an explicit quip about her sexual orientation during



An emotional Lupita Nyong'o accepts the award for Best Supporting Actress

"No matter where you're from, your dreams are valid."

Nyong'o addressed everyone with a dream that they believe might be unattainable

her opening monologue.

And one of the major contenders of the evening was Dallas Buyers Club, which features several gay characters and which won Best Supporting Actor for Jared Leto's widely acclaimed work as a transgender AIDS patient. These are important signposts in spreading the message of tolerance because, unlike festivals like Cannes or Berlin that award artier films that are seen mostly by a

niche audience of cinephiles, the Oscars recognise mainstream cinema, seen by millions worldwide.

Despite (rightful) complaints that the Academy, along with Hollywood, should be doing a lot more to further the cause of the minorities, this year's awards are at least a sign of how much better things are today.

- courtesy: TheHindu.com

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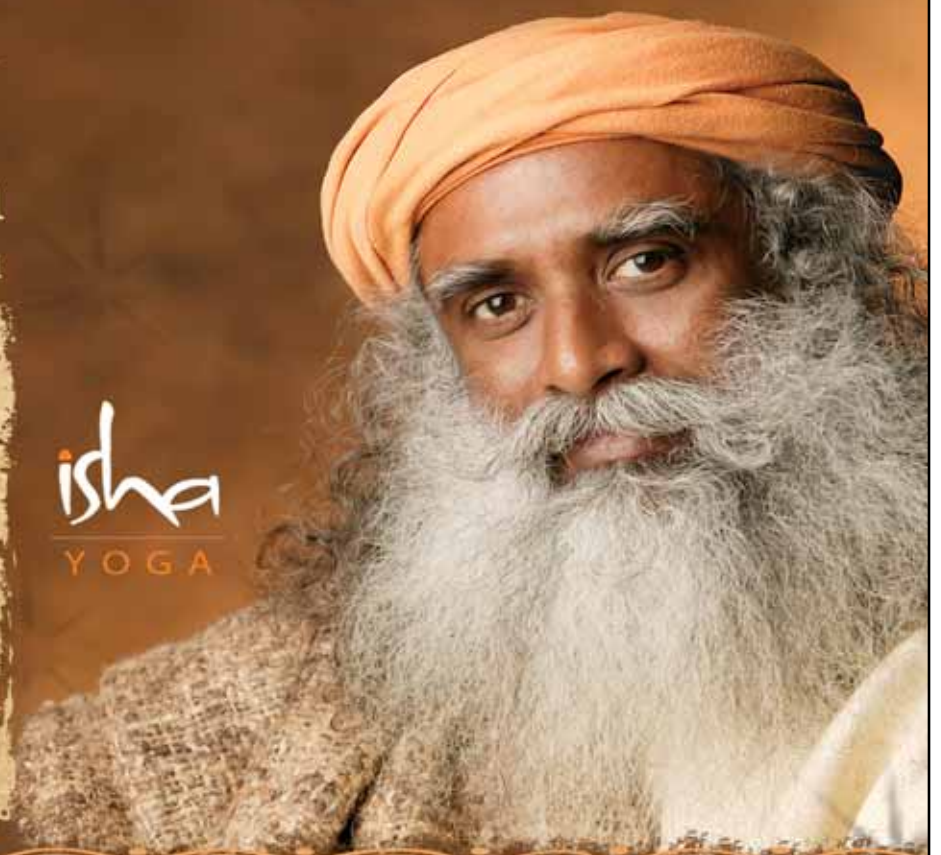
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Review



Special Feature

DEVADAS-THE ALL TIME FAVOURITE

TRIBUTE TO THE LEGENDARY ACTOR, THE LATE A. NAGESWARA RAO

C.Kamalakaran

Devadas, the blockbuster movie produced simultaneously in Tamil and Telugu in the year 1953, portrays the immortal love story, penned by the acclaimed Bengali novelist, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay. It was a box office hit screened for more than 100 days, even during its re-release, creating an everlasting impact on movie-goers.

The story is about the poignant love between Devadas (Nageswara Rao), son of a rich zamindar and Parvathi (Savithri), daughter of a less privileged neighbour. Both of them were childhood playmates, who attended the village primary school, where the headmaster of the school was the zamindar's appointee. Devadas not keen in studies, always played truant from school, besides being mischievous. Unable to control him, the zamindar sent him to the city, to reform him and to continue his studies. As expected Devadas turned over a new leaf.

After completing his studies, Devadas returned to his village as a handsome youth and met his graceful sweetheart Paru, in their usual haunt. He was so enthralled by her elegance that prompted him to express it in the song, 'Oh Devadas', "a young bud has blossomed into a beautiful flower, spreading its fragrance". As it was during their childhood, their relationship vacillated between love and hate which often strained their relationship.

In an unfortunate twist of fate, the marriage proposal put forth by Paru's father was spurned by Devadas's father, humiliating and disgracing him. Paru's father returned home outraged and set forth with a vow, to bring a wealthy man for Paru. Later when Devadas revealed his love for Paru to his father, it was rejected outright on the grounds that Paru was from a low caste and low in social status. Not able to convince his father, Devadas returned to the city disgusted and wrote a letter to Paru, his inability to defy

his father and requested her to forget him.

The jilted Paru, in order to defend her father's prestige married an elderly widower with children, a zamindar who was wealthy but too old for her. For Devadas, losing his dream girl Paru forever tormented him. His close associate Bhagawan (N.M.Nambiar) unable to retrieve Devadas from his deep sorrow, served him a glass of brandy which was a boost to drown his worries. Lured by it, he continued to drink and became an addict. Bhagawan also introduced Devadas to Chandramukhi (Lalitha), a courtesan who attracted by his personality tried to woo him. But Devadas who was obsessed with Paru, kept Chandramukhi at arm's length and continued to drink heavily that led to his destruction. Later when he became aware that his days are numbered, Devadas embarked on a train journey, to his native village with Dharmadas, his personal aide. During the nightmarish journey, constant coughing and vomiting of blood kept him awake. When the train halted at Thurkapuram station, he was reminded of Paru's village and the promise he made to her that he would definitely meet her before his death. To fulfil the promise he alighted from the train and in the absence of any motor traffic, he continued his journey in a bullock cart. All the way along it was raining heavily, making the road impassable. After relentless striving, the cart arrived at the entrance of Paru's house where the driver found Devadas lying in the cart, speechless with blood frothing at his mouth. He was laid on a makeshift bed of straw where he groaned breathlessly and breathed his last. Unable to bear the terrible news, Paru rushed to the entrance, collided head-on with the slammed door and fell dead.

The success of the movie was due to the scintillating performance of the actors mainly Nageswara Rao and Savithri, the soul-stirring music composed by C.R.Subburaman, M.S.Visvanathan, T.K.Ramamurthy, the simple lyrics with infusion of philosophy of life, written by Udumalai Narayana Kavi and K.D.Santhanam, the songs melodiously rendered by Gantasala Venkateswara Rao, K. Rani and R. Balasaraswathi, the excellent cinematography by B.S Ranga and the meticulous direction by the renowned

Vedantam Raghavaiah. Devadas well deserved the honour to be listed among the CNN-IBN'S list of hundred greatest Indian films of all times.

Nageswara Rao gave a brilliant performance as Devadas. His expressive eyes, unkempt hair and troubled countenance added strength to the role. To create the droopy look of a drunkard, the scenes were shot in the night. Nageswara Rao had immortalised the role in such a way that it kept the eyes of the audience moist. Popular playback singer S.B.Balasubramaniam once while conducting his favourite programme, 'Ennodu Paaddu Paada Vaarungal' mentioned that the audience left the theatre with tears trickling down as though one of their next of kin had died. The role of Devadas was portrayed by many over the years, in different languages. The legend of the Hindi cinema Dilip Kumar who himself acted as Devadas in Bimal roy's production said, "There is only one Devadas and that is Nageswara Rao."

Nageswara Rao besides being an actor was also a great producer who produced box office movies in his Annapurna studio, named after his wife. The upcoming movie 'Manam' was his last movie, being filmed in his studio. The movie casts three generations of his family; himself, his son Nagarjuna and his grandson Naga Chaitanya. Its a pity that he breathed his last, during its production and will not be present during its screening. Nageswara Rao's contribution towards the Telugu cinema was insurmountable. He was instrumental in bringing Telugu film industry to Hyderabad from Chennai, the home for film production in all South Indian languages.

For his valuable contribution to Indian cinema, he was honoured with the title of Padma Vibhushan, the second highest civilian award presented by the President of India, the Dadasaheb Phalke award presented by the government of India for lifetime contribution to Indian cinema. He was also thrice the recipient of the filmfare award for the best actor. Being an ardent fan of Nageswara Rao I have him close to me, earlier through the spool cassette, later through the CD and now through the DVD. Hope we get the DVD in the digital format as well. Never will a movie of such class as Devadas be produced, it's my all time favourite.



WORDS OF PEACE

A Need for Peace



Some people say life is a journey. If life is a journey, says Prem Rawat, what do we need to take along with us?

"When you go on an outing, what do you do?" he asks. "You take with you what is important. What is the traveler's dilemma? I travel a lot, so I know what that is. It's this—should you bring everything with you, including the kitchen sink?"

"It's amazing how easy it is to over-pack at home. It's amazing how easy it is to lug that over-packed luggage to your car. Only when you arrive at your destination do you realize how over-packed you are."

"You say, 'I don't need this. I don't need that. Why do I keep bringing them?' It's like you need a checklist—not of things you should bring, but of the things you should never bring because you will never need them."

Mr. Rawat spends most of each year traveling the world with a message of hope and an offer of assistance for people who want peace in their lives. Peace, he says, is not something far away or difficult to obtain. It's within everyone, and it can be felt by anyone who wants to experience it, regardless of age, health or circumstances.

"I'm talking about the journey of life," he says, "that starts when we were born,

and is going to go on till the very last breath. This journey is afoot. Have you over-packed? Have you packed the right things?"

The challenge in knowing what we need, Mr. Rawat says, is that first, we have to understand what we want.

"There is a place in you that wants to feel peace," he says. "Living life consciously is about acknowledging those needs that are fundamental to you."

Human beings have a fundamental need for peace, he says—a deep longing to be happy, to be content.

"Freedom makes you happy," Mr. Rawat says. "Clarity makes you happy. Understanding makes you happy. Peace makes you happy. Why? Because that is your nature."

"So did you bring with you on this journey, with no uncertainty, clarity? Did you bring on this journey understanding, so that every day that you walk the path of your existence, you walk not in fog, not with eyes closed, but with eyes wide open? So that every day that you exist, you know at any given moment where you want to be: inside. Then you understand that every day that comes to you is not a mistake, because you're fully prepared for that day."

To do that, he says, people need to learn to live life consciously, every day.

"People say, 'Do you really mean that? Live my life consciously every day? Isn't that going to be a little bit difficult?'"

"Okay, fine. I agree with you that it's difficult. Is there a rewind button in life? Is there a pause button? No, this is it. This is the day you have been waiting for. It has come. You have a choice: Either celebrate or feel sorry. The decision is yours. It doesn't matter who you are; the decision is yours."

"Make the decision to be in that place of peace. Make the decision to be in that joy. Then, experiencing that joy is possible. All is possible."

"The best news is that what you are looking for is inside of you and always will be, for as long as you are alive. If

someone says, 'No, it's not,' it still would be there. If someone says, 'Yes, it is,' then it would still be inside. Either way. It's simple."

"Is this a philosophy? No. Is it practical? Yes. Should you feel it? Yes. Should you analyze it? No, because even if you decide it has disappeared, it will still be there. It is still there. Be!"

To learn more about Prem Rawat, visit:

www.premrawat.com

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Special Feature

By: J.J. Atputharajah

A. Modern Challenges to Religion

Religion is a social institution that has been both used and abused from time immemorial. Though its uses far outweigh its abuses, yet the latter has done a lot of damage to its reputation and wide acceptance as an altruistic institution. Nowadays religious propaganda uses a variety of money-making strategies to reach their ends. The spiritual side of religion gets overshadowed by the constant request for money by religious organizers. It is true that money is essential for all religious projects but the main purpose or goal of religion is lost with the desperate canvassing for money which has led to erosion of people's faith in religion. By emphasizing the fantasy part

pointed by temple proprietors who pay them on a contract basis but take in all the money that is offered by the devotees who visit the temple for prayers and blessings. They make it to appear that they will help to bring more blessings to the devotees if they pay more as offerings. If you go to some of the churches in Toronto, the constant request happens to be for donations both for local causes as well as international. One cannot deny the fact that lots of good is happening around the world by the gifts donated by benevolent donations and charities but there are also cases of accumulation of money for purely selfish purposes. One begins to wonder whether the churches are basically money-making institutions under the pretext of serving God. Some of the rich members have a stran-

all evil and Jesus cautioned, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own soul?". Christendom was rent in twain as a result of this evil. Hindu temples in Tamil Nadu are said to be storehouses of jewellery and valuables. They refuse to declare their assets to the public. In Kerala one temple alone had gold and gems worth \$21 billion. Saibaba devotees have donated in millions to add to the wealth of the man who was said to be the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Treasure troves of 307 kgs of silver, 90kgs of gold and 11.56 crores in cash were found in his chamber after his death in April last year.

Christmas celebrations have also been vastly commercialised. The practice of gift-giving could be traced back to the first Christmas with the wise men bring-

to appeal to family oriented audiences, especially parents and children. Children have purchasing power and purchasing influence. In the US, children are estimated to influence \$700 billion a year spending. Marketers have invented fictitious characters like the Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny to invoke meaningful and emotional reactions in the child to shift from the importance of Jesus to children and what they can make their parents buy. The meaning of Christmas and Easter has been stripped and replaced by consumerism and gratification. This has been extremely beneficial to millions of companies dedicated to providing consumers with seasonal products year after year during the holidays. Religious sentiments are successfully manipulated by business people to achieve their goals.

The Commercialisation of Religion - *the enigma of Our Times*

of the festivities, the gifts and money- we lose touch with the true meaning of holy days. In the Christian faith, parents tell their children that 'Santa Claus' brings gifts on Christmas Day. Christmas celebrations of today help the greeting card and flower industries in a great way. Some begin to wonder what Christ has got to do with it. Children are brain-washed from their younger days to expect gifts for Christmas. In 2005 more than 120,00 letters were sent to North Pole, Alaska asking for gifts from the Santa Claus. Christmas has now become just a holiday for revelry and fun. Even followers of other religion and cultures are celebrating Christmas just to have a good time. In 2006, on Black Friday alone people spent \$20 billion and the average household spend over \$750/- per person. Adults should explain to the future generations that these festivities have religious significance and that it is not just any other day. Religion is lost in a sea of candy, gift tags and other commercialised riff-raff. Most get caught in planning parties and buying presents. People should learn to spend more time with their families during holidays without rushing to malls and bargain centers to add to their earthly goods. They will only end up by making their children avaricious for worldly goods and greedy for accumulating more of them. These habits and yearnings negate the very meaning of Christmas and make us slaves to the wiles of the world.

B. Materialism, Commercialism and Religion:

It is not only in Christianity but also in all other forms of religion we find organizations aiming at making money on the sly. Hindu priests are employed just to conduct pujas for which they expect money as offerings "archana". The Hindu priests (purohithars) are ap-



ple hold over the church. They appoint a pastor on contract and make him to dance to their tunes. They make use of the opportunity to give a good training for their children. They want them to be given the limelight in church functions and activities. Some of the televangelists' too utilise their services to make money and to their popularity and influence throughout the world. They use the holy scriptures as baits to entice the human souls. People donate generously thinking that they are going to get a sure place in heaven while all the time their recipients are wanting to have a good time in the earth with the money they have amassed.

The greed for money has tarnished the purity of religion from early times. Martin Luther protested against the extortion of money (through sale of indulgences) by the Roman Catholic Church for the remission of sins. Priests usurping role of God is unthinkable, atrocious and sheer blasphemy. Bible itself warns that the love of money is the root of

ing gifts to honour Christ as the new King of the Jews. This practice has since evolved as act of cherishing those we care about. Over the years the meanings and practices of these holidays have altered completely. It has also led to the invention of the Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny for economic gain. The Santa Claus has been immortalised by the Coca Cola Company. The Easter Bunny was also invented to please the children. Both holidays have been utilized by marketers as a useful tool to shift the meaning of Christmas and Easter from spirituality and emphasis on religion to self-willed consumption. By using religion as a marketing tool religious holidays like Christmas and Easter have readily been commercialised all over the world. Christmas boosts commercial activity with the sale of Christmas trees, gifts, expensive dinners and so on. As a result industries provoke consumers to buy more and better commodities to buy as gifts. Traders cleverly play on the importance of social ties and families in society. Marketers are able

Social ideologies of joy, love and family are easily used as tools to promote business activities. Besides proselytisation in its various forms are exploited to convert members of other Christian denominations as well as other faiths. "Jesus-business"- has become a prolific enterprise roping in vast amounts of money.

C. The Everlasting Value of Religion:

Though commercialisation, materialism and affluence have eroded the values of religion in modern society, its positive and constructive role in the spiritual progress of its adherents cannot be denied. It is indeed a massive force for the good of the world and humanity. Jesus identified two major human needs- physical and spiritual and emphasised the connection between the two when he healed the lame man and quipped, "Thy faith had made the whole". The triple values of religion are faith, hope and love and these are vital for a human being to live peacefully in this world. People of all faiths go on pilgrimage to holy shrines to find peace of mind and obtain God's blessings. Religion is essential to regulate society and sustain it. It is estimated that the number of atheists in progressive countries like Canada are on the rise. Statistics Canada(2011) reported that 67% Canadians are Christians and 24 % have no religion. The population of those who attend churches and temples are mainly confined to the aged and the adults. However every effort is being made to promote the influence of religion throughout the world by people who think ahead for the good of society and the world at large. Religion as a social institution has faced numerous challenges throughout the centuries but its role as an instrument of human progress, spirituality and destiny will last until the end of times.



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A PHOTO JOURNAL FROM THE

BY: VISHALINI SIVARAJAH

From September – December 2013, I was in Mzuzu, Malawi for an embedded learning experience (ELE). The ELE is a part of my global health specialization in the health sciences program at McMaster University. The purpose of the ELE is to be embedded in a community in a developing area through working at a non-governmental organization, while acquiring first hand experiences in the field of global health. I worked with Ungweru Organisation (<http://www.mzuzu.org/ungweru/>) in education, HIV/AIDS management, nutrition, water and sanitation, natural resources and youth empowerment sectors.

This was an absolutely life changing experience for me. Being a part of Ungweru for three months was an amazing way of getting to know the culture, community and the people in Malawi, while not having to be a tourist. It was a way of really getting to know Malawi beyond its label of a developing sub-Saharan African country, but rather as the “warm heart of Africa”, as it is frequently described in guidebooks and country profiles. More importantly, it was an eye-opening way of seeing the world that exists beyond the borders of North America.



Home

Any time I went to the field for work, whether I was walking back after visiting a local school, or I was driving back from a village meeting, or I was coming back from running an errand, I would always be greeted with this pleasant view. It encompasses the Ungweru offices on the left, the caretakers' office in the middle, and the volunteer hostel on the right. There were so many lovely moments that occurred in the buildings in these pictures – successful meetings, working on reports, learning chitumbuka (the local language), forming lifelong bonds, etc. After a long day out in the field, or running errands in town, this sight was always such a welcome one. This was home.



A Different View

This is the view from the back of the hostel. Somewhere to the right is Mzuzu University (Mzuni), and further down the path are Mzuzu Foundation Primary School and Luwinga Secondary School. I was fortunate to visit all three institutions – a few Mzuni students took us on a tour of their campus one Saturday afternoon; I visited Mzuzu Foundation to help administer an HIV/AIDS survey to the standard eight class and also spoke at a child protection presentation; and I helped administer an HIV/AIDS survey to form 1 – 4 students at Luwinga Secondary. As a university student myself, it was nice to be surrounded by so many other students, especially other university students from a different country.



Kwithu CBO

These are the tomato gardens at Kwithu, which is a local community based organization (CBO) that serves as a child based care centre (CBCC), and has an after school program for youths that were orphaned or are otherwise vulnerable due to HIV/AIDS. I was fortunate to meet a group of these lovely students later on and play netball with them. Kwithu cans and sells their tomatoes, under the name “Kwithu Kitchen” in order to provide sustainably provide maize porridge for all of the children that visit the centre. Kwithu Kitchen was once featured on the Today Show, as an American woman named Meredith Brokaw, helped Kwithu CBO learn how to can tomatoes. Check out Kwithu Kitchen's website at <http://kwithukitchen.com>.



Viyele Primary School – The Tutoring Program

In partnership with Kwithu CBO and Ungweru, two of my peers and I started a tutoring program in the ward. We had initially been asked by Kwithu to tutor some of the students that visit their centre, but upon attending one of their meetings, we could see that the need for extra help amongst the students was greater than we had expected. We visited a few schools of the nine schools in the ward and eventually chose to focus on tutoring standard five students at Viyele Primary School in math and English. Standard five students struggle a lot in school because that is the year they switch into an English medium. Between the three of us, we were tutoring between 150 – 180 students a week. This involved making lesson plans, creating homework and even administering assessments. We also had biweekly meetings with representatives from Kwithu and all of the primary schools

in the district to discuss our successes and challenges as tutors. These meetings proved to be very successful in getting all of the school representatives to talk to each other about different teaching methods they use at their schools, and how their students respond to these methods.

Viyele Primary was such a nice place to teach. The students were sweet, and often drew pictures and wrote stories for us, and the teachers and administration staff were so welcoming. Everyone treated us with so much kindness and respect; our phone numbers were even written on the faculty contact information sheet in the administration office! As if that was not enough to make our hearts melt, we were also given going away parties, by Viyele Primary and Kwithu, to thank us for the time we spent with the students.

In this photo, some students are gathered around their teachers as we walk onto the school grounds, getting greeted and walked to our classrooms by some of our other students.

“WARM HEART OF AFRICA”



Child Protection Presentations

One of Ungweru's sectors is child protection. Projects in this sector involve informing children of their rights through presentations at their primary schools, because children's rights are often ignored (early marriage, pulling kids out of school, physical/emotional abuse, etc.). These presentations occur in two installments each school year to act as an introduction to the issues, and to follow-up with the students later on. I went to several of these presentations, and spoke to the children in English, which they really loved because Malawian students begin learning in an English medium in standard five, and they really love hearing foreigners speak English. I spoke about a number of things to the students – about the importance of education and working hard, but more importantly, I tried to encourage the girls to pursue education, if they wanted to, and to not let other people hold them back because of their gender. Ungweru also had a child protection chant that we went through at every presentation, and one day when I was walking to the market after work, a little girl called out to me “mwana wawikilirike”, which is a line from the chant meaning “child protection”.



Eco Toilets at Ekwayweni

Monitoring eco toilets is one of the projects in the water and sanitation sector at Ungweru. As a part of this project, we walked around Ekwayweni village with a trained health services representative from the community, and checked to make sure that village members were using the eco toilets, making manure from the waste and had water in their sinks for washing hands. Many of the households were not harvesting manure or using their sinks properly. Many families claimed that they were too busy to fill up their sinks that morning, or they would claim that their children forgot to fill up the sinks the night before.

This is one of the sinks for the eco toilet. This household was very creative with their sink - they started growing their sweet potato crop under the sink so that the plants get watered every time they wash their hands. This was the most innovative way of encouraging good hygiene that I saw on my walk through Ekwayweni.



Nsima and Support Group Meetings

A project in the HIV/AIDS management sector at Ungweru involves having group therapy sessions for support groups in some of the villages we work with. This fun day involves discussions, talking, laughing, cooking and eating. During one of these sessions, I learned how to make nsima, a maize porridge that is a staple food item in Malawian cuisine. It is made by vigorously mixing maize flour with water over a fire (or stove), which requires a lot of upper body strength.

Another project in the HIV/AIDS management sector is monitoring AIDS Toto Clubs (“toto” means “no”) at primary and secondary schools. These are AIDS awareness clubs, where members ask questions, perform drama or poetry, and have discussions and debates about relevant HIV/AIDS-related issues. Every week, I helped to facilitate such meetings at Lupaso Secondary School, which was a 45-minute walk away from Ungweru.



Town

This is part of what is essentially “downtown Mzuzu”, or what everyone just refers to as “town”. This is where grocery stores, banks, clothing markets, cell phone shops, restaurants and the big produce markets are. This particular photo shows the only traffic light I have ever seen in Mzuzu.



“Tiguleko delele?” (“do you have okra?”) This is the local market where I often bought groceries on the days I couldn't go into town. The lady who sold me tomatoes every week always smiled and greeted me in chtumbuka when I came up to her stand. She was always so impressed when I would ask her if she had okra, in chtumbuka of course!

Vishalini Sivarajah is in her third year of Health Sciences at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario and is specializing in Global Health.



Special Feature

SportsCentre host Gurdeep Ahluwalia joins campaign for Collars Not Cruelty

Campaign against rabies saves animals, protects communities, and prevents human infection



TSN SportsCentre's, Gurdeep Ahluwalia poses with Frankie for the WSPA's #CollarsNotCruelty campaign to support vaccination programs for dogs around the world.
Photos by Jag Gundu



Some photos of dogs around the world – Photos by WSPA



Some photos of dogs around the world – Photos by WSPA



Veteran media personality Gurdeep Ahluwalia, host and reporter with TSN's SportsCentre, has joined fellow animal lovers to help eradicate rabies with Collars Not Cruelty. Ahluwalia was previously a reporter with CP24, where he also co-hosted CP24 Breakfast.

Other Canadian animal lovers can join Gurdeep and support the campaign in two ways: by having their pets sport a red collar, and by making a donation to the World Society for the Protection of Animals' (WSPA) Collars Not Cruelty campaign.

The Collars Not Cruelty campaign has brought international attention to the plight of dogs in some countries. High-profile Canadian and international supporters include fashion designer David Dixon, singer Leona Lewis, comedian Ricky Gervais, supermodel Liisa Winkler, CP24 News Anchor Karman Wong, and a number of provincial and federal MPPs and MPs.

Launched in 2011, the Collars Not Cruelty campaign is a global initiative to establish humane dog vaccination programs in countries where dogs are killed in response to rabies outbreaks or fear of rabies. So far, the campaign has saved more than 300,000 dogs from cruel and unnecessary deaths. WSPA works with local authorities to set up clinics where dogs are vaccinated and given a bright red collar so the community knows they are safe. Successful vaccination clinics have been launched in Sri Lanka, Latin America, Bali, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Indonesia. Most recently, WSPA started vaccination programs in Africa and China, where human deaths from rabies are the most common.

Rabies can be controlled through

mass vaccination programs. In 1983, Latin America committed to eliminating rabies through mass dog vaccination. Vaccination programs have seen dog rabies cases in the region decline from a peak of 25,000 in 1977 to just 196 in 2011 - a decrease of over 99 per cent. These results have encouraged other governments and communities to undertake similar programs.

QUOTES

"When confronted with a rabies outbreak, governments begin killing the dog population to try and stop the spread. We know this is ineffective and cruel. Animal culls do not prevent the spread of rabies, but with mass vaccination and community education, rabies is 100% preventable. A world without rabies doesn't have to be a world without dogs."

- Josey Kitson, Executive Director of WSPA Canada

"The evidence is clear—the best way to prevent human rabies infection is by educating the public and vaccinating dogs. By doing this, Collars Not Cruelty has saved hundreds of thousands of innocent animals and prevented people from getting sick. It's not just the humane solution; it's the only one that works."

- Gurdeep Ahluwalia, Anchor and Reporter, TSN's SportsCentre

QUICK FACTS

This year alone, more than 20 million innocent dogs will be killed due to fear of rabies and rabies outbreaks.

Unfortunately, these panic-driven culls are ineffective at stopping the spread of the disease.

WSPA's Collars Not Cruelty campaign works to establish humane dog vaccination programs in countries

where dogs are killed out of fear of rabies and after outbreaks.

With mass vaccination campaigns, along with public education, rabies is 100% preventable.

A world without rabies doesn't have to mean a world without dogs.

The World Health Organization (WHO) recognizes vaccination as "the most cost-effective strategy for preventing rabies in people" -- 55,000 of whom die of the disease every year.

Launched in 2011, Collars Not Cruelty has so far saved more than 300,000 dogs from cruel and unnecessary deaths.

Canadians can demonstrate their support for international efforts to eradicate rabies by making a donation to the Collars Not Cruelty Campaign and having their pets sport a red collar for the cause.

A case study from Sri Lanka is given below:

Collars Not Cruelty in Sri Lanka: stopping Colombo's culls

As a pilot project for the introduction of the global Collars Not Cruelty campaign, WSPA teamed up with Sri Lankan animal welfare organization, the Blue Paw Trust, to run a campaign to convince authorities to stop their cruel, costly and failing approach to tackling the threat of rabies.

For over 15 years, more than 2,000 dogs were rounded up and gassed in the city of Colombo, Sri Lanka, causing horrific suffering. A third of the city's dogs disappeared from the streets. Rabies didn't. At its peak, 70 dog rabies cases were reported in Colombo.

WSPA, local authorities and the Blue Paw Trust ran a mass dog vaccination, dog sterilization and public education program in the city – protecting

dogs, protecting people and rebuilding the trust between them. As part of this program, teams worked with the local community to humanely catch, vaccinate, sterilize and treat them.

In the first year, we vaccinated nearly 90% of dogs in an area where rabies was rife. Every vaccinated dog was fitted with a red collar showing communities that the dogs were protected against rabies. The results were startling: dog rabies cases halved and they have continued to fall year over year as the vaccination program grows. In the first six months there were just two cases in the entire city – down from a frightening peak of 70 during the culling years.

Colombo's roaming dogs are now not only safer, but also healthier, suggesting local people are feeding and caring for them without fear.

About the World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA)

The World Society for the Protection of Animals has worked to expose animal cruelty and prevent animal suffering for more than 30 years. Working with individuals, organizations and governments across the globe, our campaign work ranges from putting animals at the heart of farming to protecting animals in disasters. Consultative status with the United Nations means we have a unique international platform to prove that the lives of animals are inextricably linked to our own, and now more than ever is the time to stop their suffering.

For more information or to donate, visit www.wspa.ca/red-collar.

To learn more about the work of WSPA, visit www.wspa.ca follow us on Twitter or 'Like' us on Facebook.



TAMILS AND ST. VALENTINE

“ON FEBRUARY 14, QUITE A FEW BOYS AND GIRLS IN SRI LANKA WILL BE EXCHANGING GIFTS AND LOVE NOTES!”

By Thulasi Muttulingam

Well, it's that time of year again. Love is in the air. Of if it isn't, it's definitely on your social networking sites; facebook, twitter, instagram, your inboxes and post boxes. Brace yourselves for the avalanche of 'hearts' folks. Red ink be flowing in rivers of red on Valentine's Day.

Every conceivable category of people have a Day to celebrate who they are but the Lovers had a long head-start on this phenomenon. They had a Day, along with their own patron saint, centuries ahead of the others. It's hard to grudge them that but as many have noted, it has become a highly commercialized and over-hyped day, these days.

It is interesting to note the effect the Day has, on different cultures though. There was this hilarious write-up about how people in a relationship, feel in the modern world in the Huffington Post; http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/02/11/valentines-cards-awkward_n_4757404.html?utm_hp_ref=fb&src=sp

They forgot to mention 'modern' in which country however. In Good ol' Sri Lanka, the system is completely different. So couples in the West even live together but are uncomfortable with acknowledging feelings for each other? Here, the first thing a guy who is hitting on a girl will say

is "I love you!"

He might have seen her for the first time only a few seconds before, but it is already "I love you." And if he finally manages to find someone who says yes? He'd be lucky to hold hands with her in public, much less date – they might sustain a relationship like that for years, but it would still be "I love you" back and forth.

A girl in her sixth year of the relationship (many of them stick to the first relationship they form as much as possible) admitted to me her feelings of harassment at having to text this to her significant other often. "What do these words even mean? I just parrot them routinely. Why do we have to?"

Well, if she didn't know, how was I who had never been in a relationship supposed to know? I was just amused by all the lack-luster, half hearted "I Love You"s I had to over-hear in the All-female youth hostel I was boarded at, from the women to their men over their mobile phones. Yes, there were the cooing, simpering "I love You"s to be stomached, but more often than not, they were weepy "I Love you"s after a fight or brusque "I Love You"s after an argument. It was all rather hilarious to someone on the fringes, watching these antics, as I was.

It is not really part of Tamil culture to spout the words so easily. Where then did it come from? Ask the Jaffna parents. They usually blame the movies. Tamil movies mind you. And they might be right. For a culture in which 'love' is a bad word, it is rather paradoxical how our movies keep portraying romantic love as a fundamental aspect of contemporary life. It certainly isn't a fundamental aspect of modern Tamil life, given how parents and the community in general react to it.

No sooner than a girl and boy make eyes at each other than the gossip wind-mills start.

"Psst, psst! You know so-and-so's son and so-and-so's daughter? They are..."

"Oh really? That girl? Shocking! I thought she was a well-brought up girl. The poor parents..."

Shocking indeed! For this reason, there are quite a few of us

living here who have eschewed romance altogether. Who wants to be discussed like that by the community? Not to mention facing your parents' wrath. "In Love???" How dare you?," is very often the first response. No wonder then that those who do venture into the realm of romance, have nothing to fall back on to define how the relationship should be other than movies – where the Hero declares his love for the Heroine as soon as he meets her. In a ludicrous case of life imitating art (rather than art imitating life), many couples follow the movie-code of relationships to the letter; idiotic unnatural dialogues, furtive dates to beaches and parks (where you absolutely have to lie on the grass at 90° to each other and take pictures to upload on facebook; because the hero and heroine always lie 90° to each other on the grass, with the camera zooming in on them. It's a cardinal rule. Never mind if it's not your usual habit to lie back on grass like that), and tearful drama about potential other lovers or mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law (to-be).

The only thing they don't do in faithful reproduction of a movie romance is burst into song while chasing each other round trees – for which small mercy we can be thankful I suppose. Although I must admit, that in the movies themselves, it is the songs I enjoy the most – especially if it is an A.R Rahman number.

And so we come back full circle. Parents here warn their children against falling in love. The very word is taboo. I actually heard somebody refer to it as the "L-word". Yep, the L-word is what keeps most parents awake at night here. Whatever are their off-spring up to? Of which caste are their boyfriends / girlfriends? Youngsters these days. They just don't understand the value of our culture. Never mind if part of the culture is the movies we watched as a family, from the kids' childhood days. We did tell them not to emulate the movies.

They didn't listen though. And so

today, quite a few boys and girls in Sri Lanka will be exchanging gifts and love notes! Many of them might not even know who Valentine was and what he stood for – but amidst the sea of disapproval they face for their romance, they have latched on to this one day that celebrates them. The "I Love You"s are going to be a little more intense and heart-felt today. We singletons are not complaining though. It is also a custom here for couples to celebrate by offering their friends 'treats' – sweets of some sort generally. Well so long as I get the brownies and the cakes, I won't complain. Long live love and lovers. Long live St. Valentine who apparently died for the sake of uniting couples in Holy Matrimony.

Postscript: Maybe if they knew that aspect of St. Valentine, the average Tamil parent wouldn't be so against him! They have only two major fears regarding their off-spring.

- 1 – They might fall in love.
- 2 – They might not get married.

Make of that paradox what you will!

(Thulasi Muttulingam is a writer based in the North of Sri Lanka. Ideas and opinions expressed are her own and not of any organizations affiliated to her.)





Empowering women is a frontline for building a more peaceful and just world

Message from Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO on the occasion of International Women's Day - 8 March 2014

International Women's Day has been celebrated by the United Nations on 8 March since 1975 – this is a moment when we review past achievements and look ahead to the challenges that remain, as well as to untapped potential and opportunities.

This stocktaking is all the more important today, as we approach the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference and the deadline for the Millennium Development Goals and as we shape a new global sustainable development agenda to follow 2015. In moving forward, we must ensure that women's empowerment and gender equality stand at the heart of all of our work to craft a better future.

The United Nations has always played a leading role here, and this will continue. The United Nations Charter was the first international agreement to affirm the principle of equality between women and men. Over the years, the United Nations

and its agencies have promoted the equal participation of women and men in all efforts to promote sustainable development and lasting peace, on the basis of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As the specialized United Nations agency for advancing education, the sciences, culture, communication and information -- the empowerment of girls and women stands at the core all of UNESCO's work. Gender equality has been a global priority for UNESCO since 2008, and it remains so today. As Director-General, I am determined to prioritise the rights of girls and women on the global agenda in all areas of UNESCO's competence as well as in our action on the ground. This work is especially important in education and culture – two areas that form the nexus from where change for a better world for all women and men can be taken forward.

My conviction is clear – empowering women is a frontline for building a more peaceful and just world. Enduring violence, discrimination and inequalities – which remain deep across the world – are major barriers to positive change, and



Ms. Irina Bokova, Director-General, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)-pic by: Thomas Henrikson

we must act now and together to tackle them.

On this International Women's Day, I call on all partners – in Government, the private sector, civil society, across the United Nations -- and on all women

and men, to join forces, to accelerate the pace, to redouble efforts to achieve gender equality in every region of the world. There is simply no more powerful force for lasting peace and sustainable development.

Dark Chocolate Reaps Heart-Healthy Benefits

By Jessica Berman

Researchers have known for some time that chocolate - especially dark chocolate - is good for the heart. Now, they know why.

Besides tasting good, researchers found dark chocolate is protective against heart disease in two ways; it restores flexibility to stiffening arteries and prevents white blood cells from sticking to the insides of blood vessel walls. Both conditions can lead to the formation of plaque, which blocks arteries, causing heart disease.

The findings were made by Dutch researchers in a study of 44 middle-aged, overweight men who ate 70 grams of both dark and milk chocolate per day over two periods of four weeks.

The heart healthy substance in chocolate is an organic compound called flavanol. Flavanols are also found in vegetables, fruits and green tea.

Gerald Weissmann is editor-in-chief of the FASEB Journal, which published the study.

He says researchers discovered that there's something about the flavanols in dark chocolate that makes people prefer it to milk chocolate.



"In this controlled study, the first time it's ever been done, they gave the same amount of flavanol in dark chocolate and regular chocolate. And lo and behold, the men didn't have different amounts of flavanols in the diet. But they ate more of the dark chocolate one because they liked it better," said Weissmann.

Researchers evaluated the men's preference for dark chocolate by asking them to rate its sensory properties including smell and taste. Again, Gerald Weissmann.

"So, the taste component or psychological component of dark chocolate improved, number one, the elasticity and response of the arteries to blood flow, number two, the way that neutrophils - white cells - stick to the lining of blood vessels and number three, markers of inflammation," he said.

And knowing it was heart healthy seemed to make the men felt less guilty about indulging their sweet tooth.

Researchers may someday develop a therapy that has the same health benefits as dark chocolate. But even if they do, eating a bar of dark chocolate will still be more enjoyable.

- VOA News



President Barack Obama met exiled Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama on Friday, February 21 in a show of concern about China's human rights practices, and in spite of warnings from China that the visit would "seriously damage" ties with Washington.

The private meeting appeared to last about an hour, although the Dalai Lama, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, was not seen by White House photographers as he entered or exited the complex.

Obama reiterated his support for Tibet's unique religious, cultural and linguistic traditions and human rights for Tibetans, the White House said in a statement.

"The president stressed that he en-

"We are concerned about continuing tensions and the deteriorating human rights situation in Tibetan areas of China," Hayden said ahead of the meeting.

In Tibetan regions of China, including four provinces outside Tibet, more than 120 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 in protest against Chinese rule. Most have died.

The meeting came at a delicate time for Sino-U.S. relations. The United States has expressed concern about China's increasingly assertive behavior in the East China Sea and South China Sea and Obama's U.S. strategic pivot, or re-balancing, toward Asia, is seen as a reaction to the growing clout of China.

As part of the strategy, Obama plans



Obama Meets Dalai Lama, Despite China's Warnings

courages direct dialogue to resolve long-standing differences and that a dialogue that produces results would be positive for China and Tibetans," the statement said.

Obama also said he does not support Tibetan independence from China and the Dalai Lama said he was not seeking it, the White House said.

It was the third time Obama had met the Dalai Lama, who the White House calls "an internationally respected religious and cultural leader." Previous meetings were in February 2010 and July 2011.

In what appeared to be a small concession to the Chinese, the visit was held in the White House Map Room, a historically important room but of less significance than the Oval Office, the president's inner sanctum.

China calls the Dalai Lama a "wolf in sheep's clothing" who seeks to use violent methods to establish an independent Tibet. The Dalai Lama, who fled to India after a failed uprising in 1959, maintains he only wants genuine autonomy for Tibet and denies advocating violence.

China took control of Tibet in 1950. Human rights groups say China tramples on the religious, cultural and linguistic rights of Tibetans and enforces its rule using brutal methods.

The United States recognizes Tibet as part of China and does not support Tibetan independence, but supports the Dalai Lama's approach for more autonomy, and has long urged the Chinese government to hold talks with him, said Caitlin Hayden, a spokeswoman for the White House National Security Council.

a week-long visit in late April with allies Japan, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Friday's meeting between Obama and the Dalai Lama comes less than a week after U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry visited China. It is unclear whether he had briefed China in advance about the planned meeting.

Both countries are increasingly inter-dependent and have to cooperate on international issues such as Iran and North Korea. China is also the United States' biggest foreign creditor. As of July 31, China held \$1.28 trillion in U.S. Treasury bonds, according to Treasury Department data.

The meeting with the Dalai Lama was announced with little fanfare the evening before it took place, but prompted a stern rebuke from the Chinese government.

"The United States' arrangement for its leader to meet the Dalai would be a gross interference in China's internal affairs and is a serious violation of the norms of international relations," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said in a statement ahead of the meeting.

"It will seriously damage Sino-U.S. relations. We urge the United States to take seriously China's concerns, immediately cancel plans for the U.S. leader to meet the Dalai, do not facilitate and provide a platform for Dalai's anti-China separatist activities in the United States," she added.

Diplomats in Beijing have told Reuters Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping are expected to meet at a nuclear security summit in the Netherlands next



President Barack Obama meets with the Dalai Lama in the Map Room of the White House, Feb. 21, 2014. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

month.

When asked whether China would cancel the meeting, Hua later said at a daily news briefing: "If any country deliberately insists on harming China's interests, in the end, it will also damage its own interests and will harm the bilateral relations between China and the relevant country."

"[If] the U.S. president wishes to meet any person, it's his own affair, but he cannot meet the Dalai," she said. "The Dalai is definitely not a pure religious figure. He is using the cloak of religion to engage in long-term activities to separate China. He is a political exile."

Previous meetings between Obama and the Dalai Lama have not had serious repercussions.

In 2011, after the last meeting between the two, China responded with predictably vehement words but stopped short of threatening retaliation, indicat-

ing that Beijing was keen to avoid tensions between the world's biggest economies.

"I think China will send a strong message of protest publicly and privately, trying to warn President Obama to not go too far, because we still have a major, new relationship to build," said Sun Zhe, director of the Center for U.S.-China Relations at Beijing's elite Tsinghua University.

Xi has stressed repeatedly that China wants to build "a new brand of relations between major powers", based on principles of non-conflict, non-confrontation, mutual respect and cooperation.

The White House did not provide information about how or when the meeting was organized. The Dalai Lama had been speaking to the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative organization, in Washington on Feb 20.

(Reuters/ via VOA News)



Special Feature

Hypnosis has been defined as "...a special psychological state with certain physiological attributes, resembling sleep only superficially and marked by a functioning of the individual at a level of awareness other than the ordinary conscious state." However, research has not only revealed that hypnosis is a much more complicated thing, but it has also given rise to a number of definitions. One suggestion is that hypnosis is a mental state, while another links it to imaginative role-enactment.

Persons under hypnosis are said to have heightened focus and concentration with the ability to concentrate intensely on a specific thought or memory, while blocking out sources of distraction.

The term "hypnosis" comes from the Greek word Hypnos which means sleep.



← S. Pathmanathan, B.A. (Hons) Cey

Revised and translated by

S. Raymond Rajabalan, B.Sc. (Hons) Cey →



single dominant idea. In his later works, however, Braid placed increasing emphasis upon the use of a variety of different verbal and non-verbal forms of suggestion, including the use of "waking suggestion" and self-hypnosis. Subsequently, A French Physician Hippolyte Bernheim shifted the emphasis from the physical state of hypnosis on to the psychological process of verbal suggestion.

Contemporary hypnosis uses a variety of suggestion forms including direct verbal suggestions, "indirect" verbal suggestions

19th century by Sigmund Freud and French Neurologist Pierre Janet. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory describes conscious thoughts as being at the surface of the mind and unconscious processes as being deeper in the mind. Braid, Bernheim and other pioneers of hypnosis did not refer to the unconscious mind but saw hypnotic suggestions as being addressed to the subject's conscious mind. Hypnotists who believe that responses are mediated primarily by an "unconscious mind", like American psychiatrist Milton Erickson, make use

Hypnotism in 1889.

France became the focal point for the study of Braid's ideas after the eminent neurologist Dr. Étienne Eugène Azam translated Braid's last manuscript (On Hypnotism, 1860) into French and presented Braid's research to the French Academy of Sciences. At the request of Azam, Paul Broca, and others, the French Academy of Science, which had investigated Mesmerism in 1784, examined Braid's writings shortly after his demise.

Azam's enthusiasm for hypnosis influenced Ambroise-Auguste Liébeault, a country doctor. Hippolyte Bernheim discovered Liébeault's enormously popular group hypnotherapy clinic and subsequently became an influential hypnotist.

Hypnosis and Hypnotism

The words "hypnosis" and "hypnotism" both derive from the term "neuro-hypnotism" (nervous sleep) coined by the Scottish surgeon James Braid around 1841. Braid based his practice on the theory of "Animal magnetism (later called Mesmerism) developed by a German physician Franz Mesmer and his follower but differed in his theory as to how the procedure worked.

There is a belief that hypnosis is a form of unconsciousness resembling sleep, but contemporary research suggests that hypnotic subjects are fully awake and are focusing attention, with a corresponding decrease in their peripheral awareness

Characteristics

A person under hypnosis experiences heightened suggestibility and focus accompanied by a sense of tranquility. The hypnotized individual appears to heed only the communications of the hypnotist. He seems to respond in an uncritical, automatic fashion, ignoring all aspects of the environment other than those pointed out to him by the hypnotist. He sees, feels, smells, and otherwise perceives in accordance with the hypnotist's suggestions, even though these suggestions may be in apparent contradiction to the stimuli that impinge upon him.

Hypnotic Induction

Hypnosis is normally preceded by a "hypnotic induction" technique. Traditionally, this was interpreted as a method of putting the subject into a "hypnotic trance"; however, subsequent "nonstate" theorists have viewed it differently, seeing it as a means of heightening client expectation, defining their role, focusing attention, etc. There are several different induction techniques. One of the most influential methods was Braid's "eye-fixation" technique, also known as "Braidism".

Suggestion

When James Braid first described hypnosis, he did not use the term "suggestion" but referred instead to the act of focusing the conscious mind of the subject upon a



such as requests or insinuations, metaphors and other rhetorical figures of speech, and non-verbal suggestion in the form of mental imagery, voice tonality, and physical manipulation. Harvard hypnotherapist Deirdre Barrett writes that most modern research suggestions are designed to bring about immediate responses, whereas hypnotherapeutic suggestions are usually post-hypnotic ones that are intended to trigger responses affecting behavior for periods ranging from days to a lifetime in duration.

The conscious and the unconscious mind

Some hypnotists view verbal suggestion as a form of communication that is directed primarily to the subject's conscious mind, whereas others view it as a means of communicating with the "unconscious" or "subconscious" mind. These concepts were introduced into hypnosis at the end of the

of indirect suggestions such as metaphors or stories whose intended meaning may be concealed from the subject's conscious mind. The concept of subliminal suggestion depends upon this view of the mind. By contrast, hypnotists who believe that responses to suggestion are primarily mediated by the conscious mind, such as American psychologists Theodore Barber and Nicholas Spanos, have tended to make more use of direct verbal suggestions and instructions.

Hysteria vs. suggestion

For several decades Braid's work became more influential abroad than in his own country. The eminent neurologist Dr. George Miller Beard took Braid's theories to America. Meanwhile, his works were translated into German by Wilhelm T. Preyer, Professor of Physiology at Jena University. The German psychiatrist Albert Moll subsequently continued research, publishing

Some famous pioneers of Hypnotism

Pierre Janet

Pierre Marie Félix Janet (30 May 1859 – 24 February 1947) was a pioneering French psychologist, philosopher and psychotherapist in the field of disassociation and traumatic memory.

He is ranked alongside William James and Wilhelm Wundt as one of the founding fathers of psychology. He reported studies on a hypnotic subject in 1882. French neurologist Charcot subsequently appointed him director of the psychological laboratory at the Salpêtrière in 1889, after Janet had completed his PhD, which dealt with psychological automatism. In 1898 Janet was appointed psychology lecturer at the Sorbonne, and in 1902 he became chair of

Contd. next page...



experimental and comparative psychology at the Collège de France. Janet reconciled elements of his views with those of Bernheim and his followers, developing his own sophisticated hypnotic psychotherapy based upon the concept of psychological dissociation, which, at the turn of the century, rivalled Freud's attempt to provide a more comprehensive theory of psychotherapy.

Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, studied hypnotism at the Paris School and briefly visited the Nancy School. At first Sigmund Freud was an enthusiastic proponent of hypnotherapy. He "initially hypnotised patients and pressed on their foreheads to help them concentrate while attempting to recover repressed memories", and he soon began to emphasize hypnotic regression and ab reaction as therapeutic methods. He wrote a favorable encyclopedia article on hypnotism, translated one of Bernheim's works into German, and published an influential series of case studies with his colleague Joseph Breuer entitled *Studies on Hysteria* (1895). This became the founding text of the subsequent tradition known as "hypno-analysis" or "regression hypnotherapy."

However, Freud gradually abandoned hypnotism in favour of psychoanalysis, emphasizing free association and interpretation of the unconscious. Struggling with the great expense of time that psychoanalysis required, Freud later suggested that it might be combined with hypnotic suggestion to hasten the outcome of treatment,

Clark L. Hull

The next major development came from behavioral psychology in American university research. Clark L. Hull, an eminent American psychologist, published the first major compilation of laboratory studies on hypnosis, *Hypnosis & Suggestibility* (1933), in which he proved that hypnosis and sleep had nothing in common. Hull published many quantitative findings from hypnosis and suggestion experiments and encouraged research by mainstream psychologists. Hull's behavioural psychology interpretation of hypnosis, emphasizing conditioned reflexes, rivaled the Freudian psycho-dynamic interpretation which emphasized unconscious transference.

Cognitive-behavioural approach to Hypnosis

In the latter half of the twentieth century, two factors contributed to the development of the cognitive-behavioural approach to hypnosis:

1. Cognitive and behavioural theories of the nature of hypnosis (influenced by the theories of Sarbin and Barber became increasingly influential.
2. The therapeutic practices of hypnotherapy and various forms of cognitive-behavioural therapy overlapped and influenced each other.

Although cognitive-behavioural theories of hypnosis must be distinguished from cognitive-behavioural approaches to hypnotherapy, they share similar concepts, terminology, and assumptions and have been integrated by influential researchers and clinicians such as Irving Kirsch, Steven Jay



Lynn, and others.

At the outset of cognitive-behavioural therapy during the 1950s, hypnosis was used by early behaviour therapists such as Joseph Wolpe and also by early cognitive therapists such as Albert Ellis.

Barber, Spanos and Chaves introduced the term "cognitive-behavioural" to describe their "nonstate" theory of hypnosis in *Hypnotism: Imagination & Human Potentialities* (1974). However, Clark L. Hull had introduced a behavioural psychology as far back as 1933, which in turn was preceded by Ivan Pavlov. Indeed, the earliest theories and practices of hypnotism, even those of Braid, resemble the cognitive-behavioural orientation in some respects.

Applications

There are numerous applications for hypnosis across multiple fields of interest

including medical/psychotherapeutic uses, military uses, self-improvement, and entertainment.

Hypnotism has also been used in forensics, sports, education, physical therapy and rehabilitation.

Hypnotism has also been employed by artists for creative purposes, most notably the surrealist circle of André Breton who employed hypnosis, automatic writing and sketches for creative purposes. Hypnotic methods have been used to re-experience drug states and mystical experiences. Self-hypnosis is popularly used to quit smoking and reduce stress, while stage hypnosis can persuade people to perform unusual public feats.

Some people have drawn analogies between certain aspects of hypnotism and areas such as crowd psychology, religious

hysteria, and ritual trances in preliterate tribal cultures.

Hypnotherapy

Hypnotherapy is a use of hypnosis in psychotherapy. It is used by licensed physicians, psychologists, and others. Physicians and psychiatrists may use hypnosis to treat depression, anxiety, eating disorders, sleep disorders, compulsive gaming, and posttraumatic stress, while certified hypnotherapists who are not physicians or psychologists often treat smoking and weight management.

Modern hypnotherapy has been used in a variety of forms with varying success, such as:

Cognitive-behavioural hypnotherapy, Age regression hypnotherapy (or "hypnoanalysis"), Ericksonian hypnotherapy. Fears and phobias, Addictions Habit control Pain management, psychological therapy, Relaxation, Skin disease, Soothing anxious surgical patients, Sports performance, Weight loss etc.

Controversy surrounds the use of hypnotherapy to retrieve memories, especially those from early childhood or (supposed) past-lives. The American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association caution against repressed memory therapy in cases of alleged childhood trauma, stating that "it is impossible, without corroborative evidence, to distinguish a true memory from a false one." Past life regression, meanwhile, is often viewed with skepticism.

Psychiatric nurses in most medical facilities are allowed to administer hypnosis to patients in order to relieve symptoms such as anxiety, arousal, negative behaviors, uncontrollable behavior, and improve self-esteem and confidence only when they have been completely trained about their clinical side effects and while under supervision when administering it.



Business & Finance

Forex is the biggest financial market in the world, with some \$4 trillion traded each day. All the world's stock markets combined average only about \$84 billion per day. While it is dominated by big banks, corporations and private investment funds, the retail segment is the fastest-growing, according to Bank for International Settlements. Daily retail volume in 2010 was \$313 billion, up from \$300 million in 2000, according to Boston-based research firm Aite Group LLC.

Currencies trade in pairs, with investors buying one currency and selling another at the same time. The U.S. dollar/yen and euro/U.S. dollar are two of the most popular trading pairs; other popular ones include the British pound, Swiss franc and the Canadian and Australian dollars. In a U.S. dollar/yen trade, for example, the amount of yen you can buy for one dollar is currently ¥80.65. If you bet on the dollar, the higher the number

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try (or sell it short!), forex is an easy way to gain exposure while avoiding vagaries such as foreign securities laws and financial statements in other languages.

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Since currencies trade in a market, you can look at supply and demand. This is called fundamental analysis. Interest rates, economic growth, employment, inflation, and political risk are all factors that can affect supply and demand for currencies. A currency's value will fluctuate depending on its supply and demand, just like anything else. With a sudden dramatic rise in the number of euros for sale and a definite lack of demand for them, the euro dropped precipitously against the US dollar and other currencies. The best thing about forex is that you can buy or sell at any time and in any order. So, if you think the Eurozone is going to break apart, you can sell the euro and buy the dollar. If you think the Federal Reserve is

printing too much money, you can sell the dollar and buy the euro.

Technical Analysis:

Price charts tell many stories and most forex traders depend on them in making their trading decisions. Charts can point out trends and important price points where traders can enter or exit the market, if you know how to read them.

Succeed Like a Highway Driver

All traders need to know how to measure their potential risks and rewards and use this to judge entries, exits, and trade size. There are several important skills needed in order to become a forex trader. And like all skills, learning them takes a bit of time and practice. You cannot drive your vehicle in highways, before learning and experiencing in local roads. Learn, practice and develop your skills you will master the Super Highway of the FOREX Trading.

FOREX to Trade



rises, the more you would make, and vice versa.

You Can Trade at Home

Like the online stock trading revolution of the 1990s, the Internet has brought forex trading within reach of the average person sitting at home. Thousands of individual traders around the world can now trade currencies from their living rooms, with nothing but a computer, an Internet connection, and a small trading account. You can now make trading and investment decisions to buy and sell British pounds or Japanese yen at any time, day or night (Sunday through Friday). This brief guide will show you how. But first, it's important to know why you should trade forex.

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It's impossible to time the market – just ask any knowledgeable investment professional. Trying to hit a high return and avoid a low one by jumping in and out of the market is a sure way

to curtail your returns – and give you an ulcer. Time in the market is a much surer path to investment success. That's because of this historical truth: Markets always move up and down but the long haul trend is always up. So, stay true to a long-term investment strategy for higher long-term returns. For most investors, the best long-term strategy is to make your investments immediately, regardless of whether the current market is up or down. Even better, invest regularly instead of holding off and making a lump sum investment once a year – because, by investing regularly, you will accomplish your important investment goals:

Don't put off saving until that magical day sometime down the road when you have a few extra dollars to invest – instead, a PAC (Pre-Authorized Contribution Program) is an easy and consistent way to get a monthly investment plan working for you. It's much easier to contribute by investing small amounts automatically – for example, 10% of your earned income each month – and you will be surprised at the amount you can gain from PAC-ing it into your investments held in a RRSP, or Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA), or your non-registered portfolio. Especially at this time of year,

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it's difficult to find a lump sum to invest – but at any time of year, it's much easier to come up with \$100-200 a month through a Pre-Authorized Contribution (PAC) plan that automatically invests an amount you choose in investments you choose.

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rent price is low or high. Over time, the average cost of your investments will be lower and your potential for longer-term returns will be higher.

Sleep easier by always looking at the big picture. Don't worry excessively about the performance of one investment. View your investments from the perspective of your overall portfolio and your long-term goals. By investing regularly and using a balanced investment strategy, you will achieve your financial goals. Your professional advisor can help design the plan that's best for you.

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Property Rental - Deductions from Income

By: Ari A. Ariaran, CGA

You rent out one or more rooms in your home, or if you own a rental property, there are many expenses that can be deducted in calculating your net rental income. These expenses include mortgage interest (but not principal), property taxes, utility costs, house insurance, maintenance costs, advertising, and property management fees. Rental income and expenses can be recorded using the cash basis of accounting, unless the property rental is considered business income, in which case the accrual basis of accounting must be used.

Rental losses can generally be used to reduce income from other sources. If the rental loss exceeds income from other sources, and cannot be deducted on the current year tax return, it becomes a non-capital loss, which can be carried back or forward to reduce taxable income in other years.

If you rent out only a portion of your home, you would only be able to deduct a portion of the costs. If you rent a room to a friend or relative at less than fair market value and this result in a rental loss, you would not be able to deduct the rental loss. Any costs which are directly related to the rental portion of your home will be 100% deductible, and costs which relate to the whole building, such as property



taxes and insurance, would only be partially deductible. The expenses can be split using floor area or the number of rooms that you are renting, as long as the split is reasonable

Capital cost allowance (CCA) may be claimed based on the purchase price of the building, furniture and fixtures, etc., but not the land, and may not be used to create or increase a rental loss. If you only rent a portion of your home, then you would only be able to claim a portion of the CCA, and this may result in the loss of the principal residence exemp-

tion when you eventually sell your home. The claiming of capital cost allowance will probably result in a recapture of the CCA when the property is sold. This will happen if the selling price of the building is greater than the remaining undepreciated capital cost (UCC) at the time of sale. The difference between the original cost and the UCC will be added back to income.

If the selling price is greater than the original cost of the building, then the difference between the selling price and the original cost will be a capital gain. When

purchasing or selling a rental property, it is important to break down the purchase or sale price between buildings and land.

A change in use of your home from personal residence to rental property, or from rental property to personal residence, can result in a deemed disposition for tax purposes. This means that you will be considered to have sold your home and repurchased it immediately thereafter for fair market value. There are many factors which affect this, and professional advice is recommended.

Net rental income or loss is reported on line 126 of your personal tax return. This net income is included in "earned income" for purposes of calculating your allowable RRSP deduction limit for the following year. The net income is calculated by completing form T776 Statement of Real Estate Rentals.

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) has a Rental Income Tax Guide (T4036) which goes into detail about deductible expenses, capital cost allowance, deemed dispositions, splitting of expenses between personal areas and rental areas, and most issues regarding property rental.

Get professional accounting/tax advice to set up your accounting records for property rental, and keep complete and accurate records.

Tax Tips

Timely and relevant tax information is especially important and here are few of them compiled

by Ari A. Ariaran, CGA

- You can reduce taxable income with a Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP). RRSPs can be eligible for a tax deduction in the amount of the annual contribution. Up to 18% of earned income to a maximum of \$23,820 can be added in 2013. The deadline for contributions that

can be claimed as a 2013 RRSP deduction is Saturday, March 1, 2014. As March 1 falls on a Saturday, this deadline will automatically be extended until Monday, March 3.

- Build wealth with a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA). TFSAs allow you to make up to a \$5,500 annual contribution. Income earned in the TFSA is non-taxable, so maximize the amount of tax free growth.

- Contribute to a Registered Educa-

tion Savings Plan (RESP). Help your child or grandchild save for post-secondary education. Contributions are not tax deductible and they are not taxable when withdrawn.

- Compile all Tuition Fee and Education Credits. If you don't need these deductions you can transfer up to \$5,000 (indexed at \$6,620 in Ontario) to parents who would welcome your generosity.

- Generally, the cost of tuition for private school for elementary and secondary school students is not tax deductible. A portion of the private school tuition fees, if it relates to child care services, may qualify as child care costs.

- Weigh the benefits of withdrawing from an RRSP to purchase a home. Individuals may withdraw up to \$25,000 from their RRSP. Withdrawn amounts are repayable in equal annual sums over 15 years.

- Capitalize on family if you are a small business owner: Hire family members for legitimate work opportunities and write off the costs of their salaries.

- Income splitting. If you earn more than your spouse you could reduce your family's combined tax bill by paying your spouse's expenses, freeing up money that can then be used for investment purposes.

- Minimize overall tax liability of medical expenses. You can distribute the medical expenses claimed on behalf of each other to be advantageous for the lower-income spouse to claim allowable

medical expenses.

- Take advantage of all eligible credits. The Public Transit Pass Credit; and both the Children's Fitness and Arts Credits are all ones sometimes forgotten.

- Maximize charitable donations credits. Consider combining both donations if they total more than \$200. Up to 75% of a taxpayer's net income can be claimed as donations, except in the year of death or the year preceding death, when 100% of net income can be claimed as donations.

- Attendant care costs can be claimed for persons who are eligible for the disability amount. Attendant care expenses can only be claimed for amounts paid to an attendant who was not the taxpayer's spouse or common-law partner, and who was at least 18 years old when the payments were made.

- Child care expenses for an eligible child must be claimed by the parent with the lower net income for tax purposes. The child must have been under 16 years of age at the beginning of the year, unless the child was mentally or physically infirm.

- If you moved at least 40km to be closer to a new job, to run a business, or to attend a post-secondary educational institute full time, then you may deduct moving expenses, up to the amount you earn at the new location, or up to the amount of award or scholarship income received in the year.





BOOK LAUNCH EVENTS

"In Our Translated World" Book Launch on March 9th at Scarborough Convention Centre

By: Siva Sivapragasam

The official launch of the Book "In Our Translated World" jointly published by the Toronto South Asian Review and the Tamil Literary Garden will take place on Sunday, March 9th at the Scarborough Convention Centre.

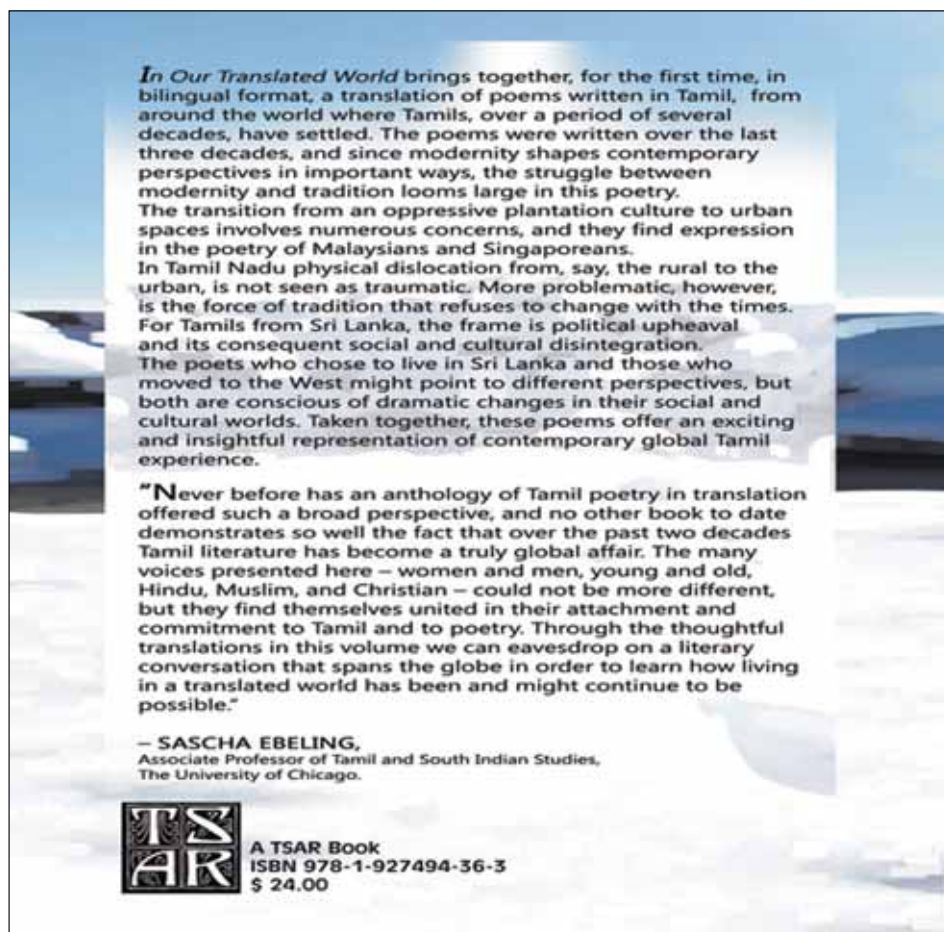
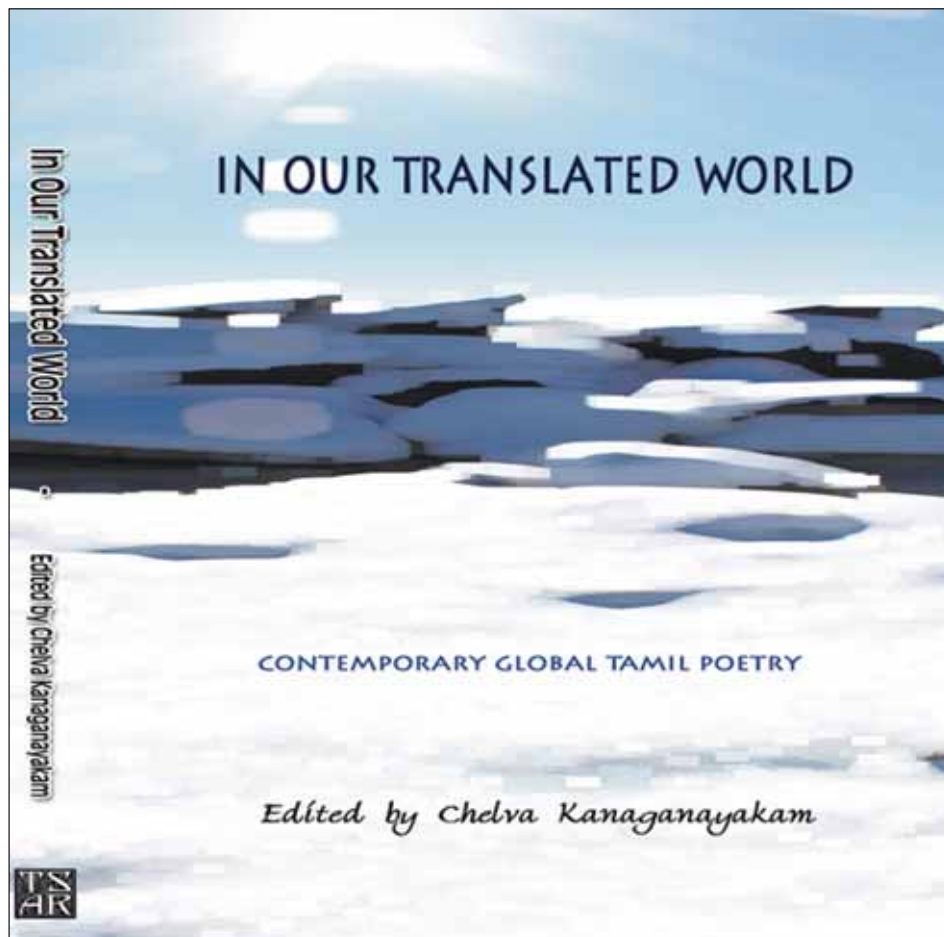
"In Our Translated World" is a collection of contemporary

Tamil poetry from all over the world, translated into English and the text appearing both in Tamil and English. The

book is edited by Prof. Chelva Kanaganayagam, Professor of English at the University of Toronto. The poems offer an exciting and insightful representation of contemporary global Tamil experience.

The Guest Speaker at the Book Launch will be Professor Sascha Ebeling from the Department of South Indian Studies, University of Chicago.

Entrance for the event is by invitation only.



Thamilar Thagaval 23rd Anniversary issue & Award Event February 2014

By: Siva Sivapragasam

The Annual Publication of "Thamilar Thagaval" this year co-incides with the 23rd Anniversary since it's inception. The Annual contains interesting and informative articles on a variety of topics useful to the community. The contents are bilingual and the contents are designed to be a reservoir of information for further academic study.

The Publishers of Thamilar Thagaval are thankful to the Tamil community for it's continued support and encouragement. The release of the Anniversary issue co-incided with the Annual Awards function held last month. Individuals who have been honoured are persons who have made valuable contributions in different fields. Among them are members of the international Tamil Diaspora as well. The Editor-in-Chief of Tamils' Information is Mr. Thiru S. Thiruchelvam, a person with several years of media experience.

"Thamilar Thahaval" Award
Winners - 2014

Lifetime Achievement Award - Prof.S. Sivananthan - Professor Sivananthan is the Director of the of the Microphysics Laboratory at the Department of Physics at the University of Illinois in Chicago. He was honoured last year at a ceremony in the White House as a "Champion of Change" for his exceptionally innovative work on "infra red sensors" and research on semi-conductor material relating to night vision technology. He is an old boy of Drieberg College, Chavakachcheri and Jaffna Hindu College.

Special Award Winner

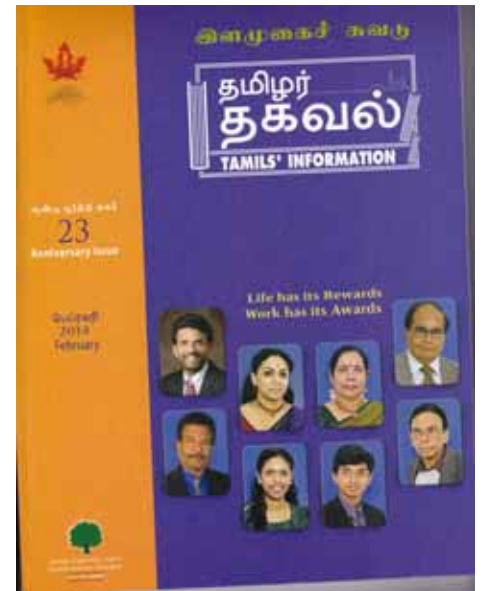
Dr. Seenivasagam Navaratnam - Dr.S. Navaratnam is a medical professional practicing in the United Kingdom for the past several years specializing in Rheumatology. Apart from his medical practice Dr. Navaratnam is engaged in social and religious activities and was responsible for organizing cultural events and bringing down leading artistes from India. He is currently engaged in offering scholarships to needy medical students in the University of Jaffna. He is an old boy of Mahajana College, Tellipalai.

Annual Award Winners

Dr. Bala Sivakadaacham - Dr. Sivakadaacham is a Botanist who has devoted several years in the research of Plant technology and written books relating to the subject. He has also pioneered books on herbal remedies and secrets to long life. His contributions have appeared in several internationally reputed magazines. He is an old boy of St. John's College, Jaffna.

Parasakthy Vinayagathevarajah

- Mrs. Vinayagathevarajah runs a Music School named "Sakthi Sangeetha Academy" and continues to be the Musician



for several music and dance events. She graduated in Music from the University of Jaffna and did higher studies in Music at the Chennai Carnatic Music Academy. She has coached several students in carnatic music and released several music cassettes too.

Bala Devakanthan - Bala Devakanthan is both a well-known writer and publisher in the Tamil literary field. Apart from his contributions in newspapers and magazines in Sri Lanka several of his stories have appeared in leading periodicals in Tamil Nadu too. He was also a winner of prizes for his contributions in Tamil writing.

Malini Pararajasingham - Malini Pararajasingham is an accomplished Bharathanatya Dancer and teacher. She comes from a family of musicians and dance teachers. She was a winner of several prizes in culturally related competitions. She runs the "Kalasaagaram" cultural Academy and trains several students in Dance. She is also a teacher of Yoga, specially to the elderly persons.

Youth Awards

Janaki Kaantharoopan - Janaki Kaantharoopan began training in carnatic music at the tender age of four and now is an accomplished musician and a dancer too. She released a music cassette at the age of twelve. She is a winner of several prizes and awards for her talent in music. She has also performed in several other countries too. She obtained a degree in Music from the Annamalai University in Canada.

Keeshikan Prabhakaran - Keeshikan Prabhakaran is a sports inclined youth who has specialized in track events. He has participated in several running competitions and won prizes. He is a student of the Pickering High School. He was also a prize winner of the United Sports Club. His ambition is to participate in several events and earn a recognized and outstanding name in the sports field in Canada.



Community Watch

Theater in Jaffna as of now means only one thing; the cinema. Vijay's new releases play to packed halls but thespians and playwrights suffer from lack of support. "There was a time, before the war, when plays were performed and enjoyed popular support here," says Johnson Rajkumar, a drama and theater teacher and Deputy Director at CPArts Jaffna. "However now, people are more used to cinema than the theater. They have to be re-acclimatized to this art form, which is what we are trying to do."

The CPArts, one of the flag-bearers of Art & Culture in Jaffna is seeking to



female oppression and gender based violence, youth obsession with television at the cost of their studies... as well as traditional productions; Kuveni performed in Thenmodi Koothu, and Arichandra Puranam (The story of King Arichandra) in Vadamodi Koothu (koothus are traditional Tamil folk plays performed in an elaborate manner).

While Kuveni and Arichandra puranam would have evoked memories in an older generation and educated the younger generation in their folk arts, the other plays – innovative and modern in their presentation – challenged the audience

Revival of theater in Jaffna - Sri Lanka North

do that by the regular staging of plays in the peninsula. One such effort was the recently concluded theater festival, staged free for the masses over the weekend of March 1-2.

Seven plays ranging in duration from 30 – 40 minutes were staged from 4.30-8.30 pm over the weekend which attracted a sizeable crowd to the venue at Kalathoothu Kalayaham.

"We asked support from the local papers to advertise to the people and some of them, though not all did oblige," says Johnson. "However, we have discovered social media is effective in communicating to people. We asked the youths engaged with us to let their friends know through facebook and text messages. We managed to get the message out to a large number of people that way."

The Arts don't have much support in the peninsula, he bemoans. "For this venture, we had no sponsors. We just worked as volunteers in our free time. The media is not helpful in disseminating information or generating interest in the people. The practice of reviewing Art and Culture is all but dead here. People including intellectuals come and see our work and voice their appreciation but there will be no reviews in the papers tomorrow. In the South of the country, the situation is enviably different. People and the media support their arts and constantly critique as well as motivate their artistes to do more. We have to build that system up in the North again. It disappeared during the war and hasn't reappeared since."

Johnson was the playwright as well as the director of most of the plays staged over the two days. Considering the depth, innovation and empathetic insight in displaying the local culture and its problems displayed by the productions, one could tell here was a very talented individual.

Most of the actors were young students of schools or the CPArts but while

By Thulasi Muttulingam



Painting from Arichandra ~ by Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906)



University of Jaffna

obviously not professional actors, they displayed a high level of talent and professionalism, which would not have been out of place at the Lionel Wendt, Colom-

bo.

The plays addressed various problems in Sri Lankan Northern Society today; unemployment of young educated people,

about problems in their midst.

It didn't always go down well. The production on female oppression and gender based violence for example was meant to evoke outrage in the audience against the oppressors and evoke sympathy for the protagonist, Malini – a talented young teacher. Being a play that faithfully reproduced cultural norms however (for the most part), it didn't evoke the necessary emotion expected at all levels.

When the protagonist is berated by her husband for coming home on the pillion of her principal's motorcycle for example (because she had worked late and missed the last bus), and when her mother in law joins in by castigating the 'loose nature of young women these days', there were catcalls and whistles of appreciation from the young male audience.

Johnson, the playwright was horrified. He too had witnessed female oppression all his life which he had empathetically portrayed in the play but had apparently not expected this reaction from fellow males. "When I initially screened this production for a few friends, they were unequivocally supportive of Malini, the protagonist. I couldn't believe that reaction from the audience. It was very upsetting. This shows that we seriously need to re-evaluate our values in the society today," he said on being queried on what he thought of the audience's reaction.

Another male audience member who had been abroad and returned, thought it showcased a problem with the younger generation. "In my generation, we were not this crass. It was the younger fellows who were behaving so disgracefully and voicing their appreciation at all the wrong moments."

Not really. The older generation was not vocal but at the end of the next production – a rather simplistic play for children by children, one older audience member sniffed to the other, "See, now



Scenes from the plays by CPArts in Jaffna



that's a nice story, simply told." These were two elderly men who had been muttering throughout the previous production of Malini's story. The portrayal of her as a talented young woman who was being oppressed by her culture did not sit well with them either.

While Johnson himself was upset by this reaction, one could say he is a successful dramatist. He evocatively showcased some real problems within society that needs to be addressed – not surprisingly, a few of the cultural bastions of that society had their feathers ruffled. That can only be a good thing. More worrying were the younger generation of males, who seemed a bit clueless that what they were seeing - something they were used to seeing in society on a regular basis; the female sex being castigated constantly to be demure and quiet - was nothing to be proud of.

The other play that addressed a societal problem in the North – youth unemployment, was far more successful in garnering audience appreciation – although it too told them some uncomfortable truths about themselves. Unlike in Malini, Johnson used smooth humour to deliver the pill however, so it was swallowed without much murmur and a lot of laughter.

The extreme competitiveness of students and their families to pass examinations, the unrealistic expectations students had that a degree should offer them an office job, and the false sense of status they had about working with their hands – the deep prejudice ingrained in them by society against blue collar jobs, were all brilliantly portrayed. Thus a farmer's son might be an agriculture graduate or a fisherman's son a graduate in Fisheries but they are outraged by their parents'

tentative suggestions to earn money in the traditional family way while waiting for the government to give them a job (aka sitting at home unemployed at the parents' expense) – a very real problem in Northern Society today. The solution offered by the play was to get over societal prejudices and get involved in the primary production jobs available. For an audience weary with its unemployment problem, this apparently wasn't too hard to swallow. They were appreciative.

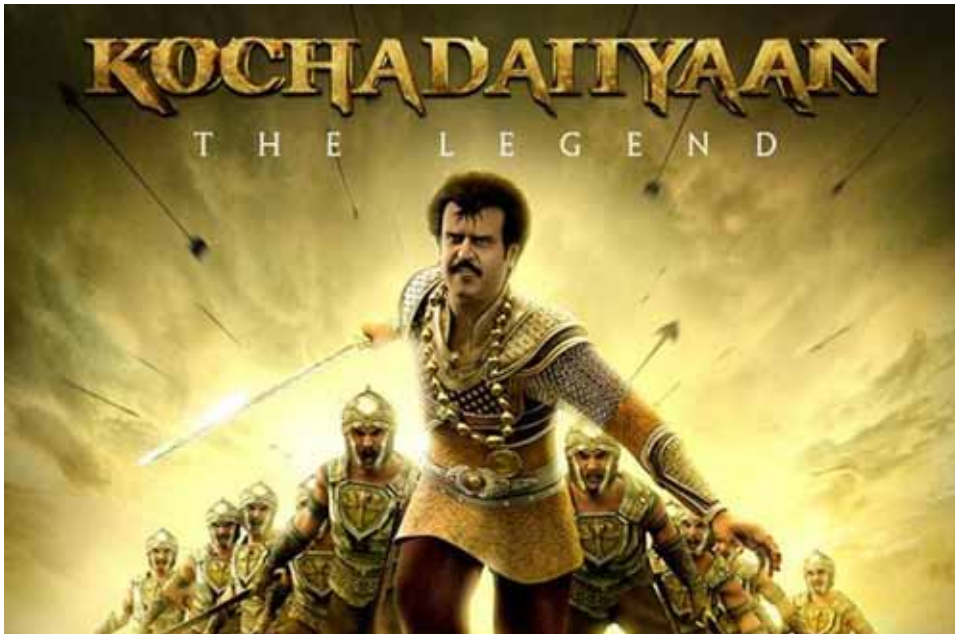
The two day festival which CPArts hopes to carry forward on a regular basis was free of charge to the audience. Jaffna society is only now relearning after the long hiatus of war, to attend plays and stay out late (late being 8,30 pm in the night). It was nice to see a number of women on bicycles and motorcycles making their way back home after the festival. Just a few years ago, this was not

possible. The Jaffna Music Festival held immediately after war's end in 2009 for example, had more audience members from other parts of the country than within Jaffna. Lack of exposure to such events as well as unavailability of private transport, even for those interested was a huge problem, but now just a few years later, buses and three-wheelers operate late into the night and street lights are widely available for those going home on cycles.

As Johnson earnestly told the audience, in the South of the country, plays are widely attended by the locals who support the artists by paying to see their performances. There are talented artists in Jaffna too. The society will soon hopefully revive enough to take part in such entertainment as well as pay to help their artistes prosper.



Rajinikanth's Kochadaiyaan Releasing In 6 Languages



The much-awaited period film Kochadaiyaan starring Tamil superstar Rajinikanth and Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone in the leads, would be released in six different languages. The movie is being released in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Punjabi, Bhojpuri and Marathi, a release here said. The film would be sent to the Censor Board during the third week of this month and it is scheduled to be released during the summer season, it said.

This is the first time in Indian Cinema history that a movie is getting released in six Indian languages, it said. Meanwhile, Karbonn Mobiles, one of the movie's sponsors, is planning to undertake a massive marketing campaign for Kochadaiyaan. Hoardings and banners of the movie will be displayed at 3,650 Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd petrol outlets in Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. "In Chennai alone, over



100 hoardings are planned to be set up", it said.

The audio and trailer of the movie Kochadaiyaan would be released at a function in Chennai on March 9 in Tamil, Hindi and Telugu languages. A new model of Karbonn Mobiles would also be launched on that day, it said. Eros International and Media One Global Entertainment, are the producers of the movie, which is directed by Rajinikanth's daugh-

ter, Soundarya R Ashwin.

The music of Kochadaiyaan is scored by double Oscar winner AR Rahman and sound recording by another Oscar winner Resul Pookutty. The movie also has actor-politician R Sarathkumar, Bollywood actor Jackie Shroff, Tamil actors Adhi, Nasser, actress and danseuse Shobhana, the release added.

- PTI

U.S. Draft Resolution on Sri Lanka Promotes neither Reconciliation nor Accountability

US based premier Tamil Advocacy Organizations says

WASHINGTON, March 5, 2014 | The United States Tamil Political Action Council (z) expressed its deep disappointment with the United States' draft resolution on Sri Lanka, presented recently at the 25th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The absence of a clear call for international investigations into the mass atrocities of 2009 has shocked the international human rights community, civil society and advocacy organizations like USTPAC.

"In light of the Sri Lankan Government's failure to act, the United States' apparent decision to call again, for the third year in a row, another domestic investigation by the Sri Lankan government, while not seeking to formalize an OHCHR investigation into a Commission of Inquiry is a profound disappointment to the victimized Tamil community," said Dr. Karunyan Arulanantham, President of USTPAC.

UN bodies and human rights organizations have estimated that over 40,000 ethnic Tamil civilians were killed during the final months of the war in 2009. These killings occurred as part of a systematic program in which the Sri Lankan government designated areas, including hospitals, as "No-Fire" zones, and then extensively bombed and shelled those

same areas.

The United States Department of State's own 2013 report on Sri Lanka recorded deteriorating human rights climate in Sri Lanka ripe with torture, extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrest and detention, attacks on journalists, and "widespread impunity for a broad range of human rights violations." Despite overwhelming evidence of these horrific crimes, the Government of Sri Lanka has failed to take even modest steps to ensure accountability for the war crimes for the last five years.

USTPAC calls on the United States' government to heed the growing consensus in the international community, as expressed by the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights, by amending its resolution to call for an independent international investigation in the form of a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the atrocities committed by both sides during the final stages of the ethnic conflagration in 2009. "Permitting the Sri Lankan government to thumb its nose at the international human rights community only encourages impunity and further mass atrocities in Sri Lanka and elsewhere," observed Dr. Arulanantham.

(Full Text of USTPAC Media Release)



Tamil Literary Garden offers Scholarship Award of \$1,000 for outstanding Student Essay

The Tamil Literary Garden is inviting undergraduates and graduate students to submit an essay in English on the topic: "New Technologies: Refashioning a Tamil Identity." The last few decades have witnessed a burgeoning of new technologies, with the consequence that it is now possible to speak across spaces and to communities in ways that were hardly possible earlier. Not only does new technology provide access to a broad spectrum of people in a short span of time, it enables forms of creativity that did not exist

before. The objective of the essay should be to critically examine the impact of new technologies on creating, sustaining, or imagining a Tamil identity.

The essay should not exceed 3000 words and should be submitted on or before 30 April 2014 on line to ckanagan@chass.utoronto.ca. The winner will be given a certificate and \$1000.00 at the Tamil Literary Garden awards ceremony in June 2014 and the essay will be published in the KALAM magazine.

OBITUARY

**CHRISTINA
ANANDASOTHY
SABARATNAM****25 Dec 1934 - 1 March 2014**

Beloved wife of late R A Sabaratnam,
Daughter of Late
Mr & Mrs. A P Thambiah and Poopakiam,
Daughter in Law of Late Mr & Mrs. Rasiah
Martin & Nallammah,
Mother of Ajith Sabaratnam (Canada) &
Maureen Nathan (UK),
Grandmother of Ram, Krishna, Jeremy,
Julian, Aidan,
Mother in Law of Suhasini & Navanathan,
Sister of late Ratnasothy, late Elankainesan,
Navasothy,
Theseimalar, and Jegasothy.

Funeral will be held in London, England.

Visitation:

Friday, March 7, 2014
10.30 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Burial Service:

Saturday, March 8, 2014
9.30 a.m.

Contact :

Ajith Sabaratnam: **647 401 5800**
London: **44 208 621 6701**
Roshan: **416 561 5733**
Suha: 647 296 8220



Tribute to late K.S. Balachandran

10 July 1944 - 26 February 2014



A role in acting



K S Balachandran



Award Acceptance Speech



Tamil Star Radio Opening



Konesh TV Opening



Maname Radio Play



Valvu EnumVattam- Short film - Canada



KS Balachandran



Vadai Katru Film - Sri Lanka



Vadai Katru Film Srilanka

By Dr. K. Theivendirarajah,
Secretary, JCCOBA Canada.

We pay tribute to one of our distinguished old boys of Jaffna Central College, K.S. Balachandran who passed away on February 26th 2014 in Toronto. The late K.S.Balachandran was well known to the Tamil community in Sri Lanka and in Canada as a Tamil actor, writer, director and producer of plays and films.

His distinguished career as an artist spans more than 40 years, started with acting in Radio drama serials in the 70s in Sri Lanka. Many will still remember the character role 'Somu' he played in the famous Tamil drama serial "Thanyatha Thagam". Some of the other popular drama serials were "Vaththiar Veedil" and "Sillaiyur Selvarajan". After immigrating to Canada he continued his acting career, produced and directed many dramas, films and conducted numerous stand-

up-comedies and Radio and Television Talk shows.

We Centralites remember him as a wonderful person ever willing to participate in our Cultural shows (Madhya Theepam) and in our annual Central Nite dinner Dance events. We loved his stand-up-comedies, "Annai right" was one of his famous comedies. He had a pleasant personality and everyone liked and enjoyed his nice way of telling stories.

In 2006 at one of our cultural shows that took place at Sir John MacDonald Collegiate in Toronto, the Jaffna Central College Old Boys' Association, Canada honoured K.S. Balachandran with the "Palkalai Venthan" title (see photo of 2006). We admire his sincerity and his immense contributions to the growth of Sri Lankan Tamil culture through his acting career.



Jaffna Central College Old Boys' Association, Canada honoured K.S. Balachandran with the "Palkalai Venthan" title (photo of 2006).



Tamil Star Radio Opening

Condo For SALE



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Taxes for 2013: \$1,424.41

Maintenance Fee: \$558.49

Sale Price: \$254,900

Condo For RENT



McCowan & Finch 5001 Finch Ave East

2 Bedrooms 2 Full Washrooms Condo Suit In Luxury Monarchy Building at Excellent Location. 24 Hour TTC, Right Opposite To Woodside Square, TD, BMO Banks, LCBO, Food Basic and Restaurants. Bright and Spacious Corner Suite. Fridge, Stove, B/I, Dishwasher, Washer & Dryer, Cac All Electric Light Fixtures And All Window Coverings included.

Available immediately.

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Ken Kirupa Nominated In Scarborough-Guildwood As Ontario PC Party Candidate

Full text of the press release by Ontario PC, Scarborough-Guildwood

SCARBOROUGH – With an election on the horizon, the Scarborough-Guildwood Provincial PC Association held its nomination meeting. Ken Kirupa, realtor and successful entrepreneur, was officially nominated as the candidate in Scarborough-Guildwood. Ken ran in the by-election last summer, finishing a very close second.

Ken thanked a rousing crowd - "I am honoured and humbled to once again represent you as the PC candidate right here in our community of Scarborough-Guildwood. We gained so much momentum during the last campaign, and I know that this time, with your

help, we will defeat the Liberals and have a Progressive Conservative government at Queen's Park."

Ken spoke of his continued involvement in the community, where he resides. He spoke passionately about the concerns of fellow residents, which included the deteriorating economy, the lack of jobs, and the Liberals failure to move forward with their last minute subway promise. Ken said, "I said it before and I will say it again, I am the only candidate in Scarborough-Guildwood who will bring subways to Scarborough and will do it without raising taxes."

Ken also focused on the fact that just last week, the Liberals voted down the PC Party Million Jobs Act. He appropriately noted, "Mitzie Hunter, just last week,

told the residents of Scarborough-Guildwood she doesn't care about us having jobs. Why should she? After all, she has a job...let's make sure she will need to find a new job after the next election. It won't be so easy in this terrible job climate."

On hand to celebrate his nomination were several high-ranking Progressive Conservatives, including MPP Lisa MacLeod, Critic for Energy and Francophone Affairs, and Party President Richard Ciano.

For further information, contact info@kenkirupa.ca.

Photo Credit: KSR Foto Ram





HCC Alumni Association of North America - AGM 2014



Hindu College Colombo Alumni Association of North America held its Annual General Meeting on the 26th of January 2014 at Princess Banquet Hall from 2:30 pm. Please place this information on the next issue if possible.

The new executive committee members are:

President - Elanko Ratnasabapathy

Vice-President - Wijayaraj Senathirajah

Vice President Operations - Ram Krish

Asst. Vice President Operations - Kalachandran Kanapathipillai

Vice President Finance - Josh Suresh

Vice President Projects - Jeneevan Theivendran

Vice President Communications - Sribavan Balakumar

On another note, we are celebrating our 25th anniversary this year. So please provide some publicity for that as well when publishing about the AGM.

Tamils in Stouffville celebrate Tamil Heritage Month

Local Tamils in Stouffville gathered in large numbers last month to celebrate Tamil Heritage month. This was one of the first Tamil events held in Stouffville and the event was organized by the Stouffville Multicultural Association.

Tamils are gradually moving into Stouffville now in sizeable numbers. During the years, more Tamil-specific programs have been created for Whitchurch-Stouffville residents, including language classes at Stouffville District Secondary School and dance lessons. Guests at the Heritage Month function were entertained with music and dance programmes.

(Seen here are some pictures taken at the event last month)

Picture Courtesy: Mike Barrett Photography)



Ontario Srilankan Pensioners Association

P.O. Box 455, 1910 Kennedy Road, Unit-4 Scarborough, Ontario, M1P 2L8

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Email: ospa_canada@hotmail.com



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Mr. R.S Jogendra
647-285-9336

Vice Presidents

Mr. G.S. de Silva
Mr. Maya Kandiah

Secretary

Mr. R. Shanmugaratnam
416-335-9450

Asst. Secretary

Mr. T. Ponnampalam

Treasurer

Mr. T. Thangarajah
416-266-7895

Asst. Treasurer

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Mr. R. Sundaralingam
Mr. Siva Sivaramalingam
Mr. K. Vadivelu
Mr. M. Velauthapillai
(ex-officio)

Advisor

Mr. Manuel Jesudasan
Barrister, Solicitor
& Notary Public
Auditor
Mr. M. Velauthapillai

O.S.P.A. holds its Fourth A.G.M

The Ontario Sri Lankan Pensioners Association (O.S.P.A) will be holding its Annual General Meeting on April 5th, 2014, commencing from 9.00 am at Miracle Family Temple, 1100 Bellamy Road North Scarborough Ontario M1H 1H2. In addition to the election of the Board Of Directors for the year 2014, the main agenda among other is for discussion at this meeting will the following:

1. The problems pensioners and W&O.P. pensioners are still facing to obtain their pensions.
2. The non-payment of pension increases granted to all pensioners by the government.
3. The failure and/or difficulty of those who didn't get their award due to displacement and or circumstances beyond their control in terms of the Special Circular No: 1488 by the ministry of public administration.

In order to attend and participate at the AGM all those who are members are kindly requested to re-new their membership; and others including prospective pensioners is requested to enrol them as members well in advance of the meeting by contacting anyone of the undernoted. Those desiring to serve on the Board and those wishing to make any proposals for consideration by the AGM are requested to forward them duly proposed and seconded by members of the Association to the Secretary at least 15 days before the meeting.

As this is a very important meeting, where the Consul General of Sri Lanka and pension officer are also expected to be present all the pensioners and prospective pensioners are kindly requested and encouraged to attend the meeting well in time by 9:00 am. Since the meeting is scheduled to go on till 1.00 pm. refreshments will be served.

Ramilingam Shanmugaratnam
Honorary Secretary
Tel. (647) 835-7426

Contacts for membership: Regis, President, Tel: 647 285 9336;
Silva, Vice-president, Tel: 416 293 8592; Vice-president, Maya
Kandiah, Tel: 416 895 8111, Thanga, Treasurer, Tel: 416 266 7895

கலைச்சங்கமம் 2014

சண்டிலிப்பாய் ஐக்கிய மன்றம் - கனடா

Sandilipay United Society of Canada

Annual Dinner 2014

All from Sandilipay are welcome to attend

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மகிழ்வோர் அழைக்கின்றோம்.

Venue/இடம் : East Town Banquet Hall
2648 EGLINTON AVENUE
BRIMLEY & EGLINTON

Date/தேதி : April 05, 2014 (Saturday)

Time/நேரம் : 6:00 pm

For Further Information / மேலதிக விபரங்கட்கு:
Please call: 416-299-0672



TAMIL CULTURAL AND ACADEMY SOCIETY OF DURHAM, ART AND DRAWING CLASSES

By: Lavanya Pathmanathan

Art is said to be a universal language in which any individual is able to understand the meaning and emotion conveyed by the artist. It is a unique skill that takes a substantial amount of patience and practice. However, the end result is something that is worth all the time spent. Thus, the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham have begun art classes, occurring on a bi-weekly basis, to encourage young children and youth to express their talents. The TCASD children and youth learn the basic principles and elements of design in visual arts. In addition, every class they are given projects that challenges their creativity. Each project is different and works with various materials. This allows the youth and children to figure out which medium they prefer and brings out their individuality.

The participants have created art portfolios to store and protect all of their work. They were decorated with their names and many of the hobbies and ac-

tivities they enjoyed. The children and youth also created Valentine's Day cards to celebrate the holiday. In the most recent class, they were taught the basic colour wheel and the terminology used to describe the various colours. The children and youth were then introduced to their upcoming project, paper mâché. This art form is where the artist uses paper or newspaper, dipped into watery glue, to create an object of their choice. It is a very tedious process that takes a lot of patience. After this was explained, the kids were ecstatic to begin this project. At this point, they have begun the early stages of planning and can't wait to start building their creations.

As we are now surrounded in a world of technology, it is essential to teach those younger than us the importance of having a creative and imaginative mind. Even though society is forever changing, art will always be a part of it. Who knows, maybe the next famous artist may be sitting in one of those chairs.





Tracy McCharles Write Up

By Abira Vaithilingam

On January 19th 2014 a few selected youth from the Tamil Cultural and Academic Society of Durham were recognized for 'contributing tirelessly to enriching the Tamil culture and heritage in our region. The activities you are involved with show you freely invest your spare time in making our community a better place

for everyone'. The event took place at Petticoat Creek library and Community Centre in Pickering where Tracy MacCharles, MPP for Pickering-Scarborough East congratulated and honored Iswarya Thayaparan, Karrthik Tharmaratnam, Lavanya Pathmanathan, Trishna Swaminathan, Timothy Thirukumar and Abira Vaithilingam with certificates.



TCASD Partnership with Ajax Library

By: Taneeka Thirukkumar

This is an educational program organized by Ajax Library with TCASD partnership. Our Snowy Literacy Day event was held on Saturday, Feb 8, 2014, at Ajax Library, Mc Lean Community Centre.

This year's featured book is Over at the Rink by Stella Partheniou Grasso. She was personally with us and led the program. These snuggle up and family reading program designed to encourage all the parents and children to read

together to expand the child's vocabulary and language skills, and stimulate imagination, emotional development and interest in new ideas.

In the spirit of the Sochi Olympics, this year's reading theme is Hockey. After reading the book, all the kids tracked their reading progress on a snuggle up and coloured their reading session. It was a very fun activity and we had a good turn out. Here are some pictures from the event.



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TEAM DTA Appreciated by Hon. Minister Chris Alexander for their community involvement and selfless volunteering initiatives



TEAM DTA with Hon. Minister Chris Alexander - 17 Feb 2014

TEAM DTA was proud to hear that 10 youth were chosen to be awarded by Honorable Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Chris Alexander for their community involvement and selfless volunteering. Three more youth were awarded by him for their unlimited contribution to the community in the form of Music and Dance. These three youths are proud icons of Durham Tamil Association. Also, three adult volunteers received the honor from the Minister for their selfless service to the community. This appreciation by our Minister has encouraged other youth to participate in such community based events.

YOUTH VOLUNTEERS OF TEAM DTA



Abhishna Jaysundararajah



Ashley Kuarai



Jeremy Francis



Kabithan Ravichandran



Keeran Sivanesan



Maenusha Raguvarnan
Being recognized for Dance



Sarika Navanathan being
recognized for music



Neraia Thillairaiyah



Rishi Suresh



Naveen Sivakumaran

ADULT VOLUNTEERS OF TEAM DTA



Shawne Nimalan



Niveda Ramalingam



Mr. Kanqa Sivanathan



Mrs. Dujavanthi Swiss



Mrs. Uma Suresh



DTA's participation in the City of Pickering's HERITAGE DAY CELEBRATION



Durham Tamil Association had actively participated in the City of Pickering's Heritage Day Celebration at the Pickering Town Center on 22nd February 2014 from 11 am to 5 pm. This year, the heritage festival was a dynamic celebration showcasing Pickering's rich heritage and cultural diversity. DTA gave a live entertainment and colorful performance for one hour non-stop ROCKIN' & BOPPIN' show from the traditional Tamil culture to the modern era. Pickering Advisory Committee and the dignitaries greatly appreciated our program as it was very lively, ecstatic event of the day. Durham Tamil Association had a stupendous booth depicting the golden times of the Ancient Kings of Tamil Kingdoms. We had the palace backdrop with Kings and all the guests, members and shoppers wanted to click a picture with them. Thanks to our Board Director Hanthan Manickavasagar and member Uthayan Manickavasagar who royally accepted to be our Kings for the day. Our Secretary Mano Pancharatnam and Uma Suresh were the Master of the Ceremony. The program started with the classical dance by the young students of Kalai Natyalaya Fine Arts. The dance and the costume stole the hearts of the viewers. This extraordinary performance was choreographed by Mrs. Kalaimathy Vageesan. Followed was the song by our proud icon of Durham Tamil Association and the Tamil Community Ms. Sarika Navanathan. She entertained everyone with the popular number "Rolling in the Deep". Next was a folk number from the film Kumki. Young performers displayed the ancestral outfit of the tribal community and brought out the lifestyle of Tamil tribes in their dance which was choreographed by our youth Maenusha Raguvaran. Our Durham Little Superstars presented an energetic dance for a number from the popular Singam 2 movie. This was choreographed by Uma Suresh and assisted by the youth volunteers Nerajah Thillairajah and Monesha Ragavan. Being a multicultural event we had Joshua Francis took away the audience by singing 21 Guns by Green Day, while his brother Jeremy Francis played the lead electric guitar. "Mann Vaasanai" group dance choreographed by Mrs. Uma Suresh was a great applaud for its foot tapping dance. Dr. Vijayalakshmi Navaneetha Krishnan's song "Thottu Kadai Orathile" brought the original flavor of the ancient folklore and was massively appreciated. Cute little toes danced for the Tamil movie song Google Google choreographed by Mrs. Hema Karthik and assisted by Mrs. Komathy Ram. This duet dance was appreciated for the uniformity and wonderful dress code that attracted all the viewers. God had bestowed every child with the talents that all parents need to explore. Krishan Thananjeyan was one such gifted youth of DTA. A heart touching performance by Krishan Thananjeyan, an autistic child earned a standing ovation. He stole the hearts of all the viewers and guests by his outstanding violin performance. This youth did not learn both vocal and violin from a teacher, but learned by glancing through the YouTube and other music CDs. Mind blowing performance for the Prayer Song was choreographed by our Executive Committee Member Mrs. Theepa Sivasangar. As the young performers danced, the audience cheered and clapped and jived. Last but not the least, our vibrant Youth Girls Team staged Remix Galaatta that was choreographed by our youth Abhishna Jayasundarajah. This is a folk dance blended with the upbeat music genre, rhyming and colloquial lyrics. Many dignitaries visited our booth and encouraged the children and youth performers. Our sincere thanks to the City of Pickering for this great opportunity to showcase our rich culture and to share with other community groups.

PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER PARTICIPATES IN QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH CANADIAN MANUFACTURERS AND EXPORTERS



Prime Minister Stephen Harper, joined by Jayson Myers, President and CEO of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME), and Jason Langrish, Executive Director of the Canada Europe Roundtable for Business (CERT), participates in a question and answer session with members of CME and the CERT. PMO photo by Jill Thompson



Prime Minister Stephen Harper meets with workers at Hydroform Solutions prior to a question and answer session with members of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters and the Canada Europe Roundtable for Business. PMO photo by Jill Thompson

Prime Minister Stephen Harper participated in a question and answer (Q&A) session with members of Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters (CME) on Feb 28th. The session – which took place at Hydroform Solutions in Brampton – was moderated by Jayson Myers, President and CEO of CME, and Jason Langrish, Executive Director of the Canada Europe Roundtable for Business.

During the Q&A session, the Prime Minister discussed the economy and measures that our Government is taking to help Canadian businesses succeed both at home and abroad. Some of the measures that were highlighted included support for Canadian manufacturers in Economic Action Plan 2014, tax reduction, the elimination of unnecessary regulatory burdens, and the Canada Job

Grant. The Prime Minister also highlighted our Government's unprecedented efforts to increase access to international markets, including through the agreement in principle that was reached with the European Union last October on a comprehensive trade agreement that will greatly benefit Canadian businesses, including the manufacturing sector in Ontario.

FENNELL LEADS PEEL COUNCIL TO UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSE SHERIDAN COLLEGE'S UNIVERSITY PLAN

On Feb 27th, 2014, Peel Regional Council unanimously endorsed a motion moved by Mayor Susan Fennell, and seconded by Mayor Hazel McCallion, to support Sheridan College's plans to become a university.

The following is a statement by Mayor Fennell:

"I was proud to lead my colleagues on Peel Regional Council to vote in favour of supporting the creation of Sheridan University – a post-secondary institution committed exclusively to undergraduate professional education.

"Sheridan College is a world-class post-secondary institution with an important presence in Peel, educating thousands of students from Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga.

"Sheridan College is home to campuses in the cities of Brampton and Mississauga, undertaking first-rate research and offering exceptional teaching experiences.

"Last November, Brampton City Council voted to unanimously commit to a post-secondary university education strategy; at the heart of our city's strategy is Sheridan's university vision.

"Brampton has a long, strong and proud relationship with Sheridan. During my first term as mayor, Brampton invested \$2.5 million over five years in the Sheridan Centre for Advanced Manufacturing and Design Technology.

"A university presence will lead to new job creation, new businesses, a stronger economy and greater prosperity by elevating the quality of life for residents.

"Establishing a university in Brampton is a gift of quality education current and future generations of residents will embrace."



Brampton Mayor Susan Fennell

CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT ON PROSTITUTION LAWS

Our Government is seeking your input on an important issue that will affect our community – legalized prostitution. By going online to www.justice.gc.ca and giving your input you can help build Canada's new prostitution laws.

Recently the Supreme Court made a decision that would see operation of brothels, living on the avails of prostitution, and communicating in public for the purposes of buying and selling sex will become legal. They have given the Government one year to create a new law to protect Canadians from this threat. We are asking for your help to make this law.

Prostitution harms our communities, those engaged in prostitution, and other vulnerable persons. Canadians like you are affected by this issue, and as should be involved in combatting it. We are asking Canadians across the country to provide their input through an online consultation to ensure this new law that reflects your values.

While the Conservative Government is working to protect our communities from this threat, the Liberal Party is eager to legitimize prostitution and drug use. The Liberals want to protect the "successful businesses" being run by those who profit from the sex industry, likely as additional venues for taxation. We need a more decisive response that truly combats this threat. Tell us how by visiting www.justice.gc.ca today.



Parm Gill, MP, Brampton-Springdale



SANGKAT MOCHAN HANUMAN MANDIR IN AJAX CELEBRATES THE FESTIVAL OF HOLI

Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir and Cultural Centre is located at 339 Westney Road, unit 101 in Ajax, Ontario. In keeping with the Mandir's outreach efforts of information sharing with the diversity of the broader community, the resident priest- Pandit Rabindranauth (Rudy) Tiwari has decided to provide an explanation of the origin, and philosophical significance of the Hindu Festival of Holi.

A very long time ago, there was a mighty demon king named Hirnakashyipu who had won all the three worlds of heaven, earth and hell and had thus, become very proud. He assumed that he could defeat anyone including Lord Vishnu with his valor. He went to the extent of enforcing a law that would have everyone worship him instead of other revelations of the one God. However, the king's little son Prahlad refused to accept his commands and continued to worship Lord Vishnu with complete and steadfast devotion. Infuriated by this defiance, the king ordered his soldiers to throw his son down a hill. Praying fervently and having full faith in Lord Vishnu, Prahlad did not retract and the Lord rescued him from harm at the last moment.

Flustered by the news of the rescue, King Hirnakashyipu enlisted the help of his sister Holika, who had a boon (divine blessing) that she could walk through a fire unharmed in order to get rid of his son Prahlad. The wicked aunt Holika agreed to the evil plot by her brother, and proceeded to enter the fire with her nephew Prahlad. Both the King and his sister had forgotten that she could only enter the fire alone or she would perish if accompanied with someone else. Thus, through the miraculous blessings of Lord Vishnu, son Prahlad remained unharmed but Holika was burnt and died instantly. Holi is thus celebrated to commemorate the death of the evil aunt Holika, after whom the festival is named, and the new life granted to Prahlad for his devotion and faith to the Lord. Holi reminds us of the triumph of good over evil.

So, on the first day of Holi or the full moon day, colored powder known as 'gulal' is arranged on a 'thali' (platter) and colored water is placed in a small brass pot known as 'lota'. As a good omen, the eldest male member of the family sprinkle colors from the 'thali' and 'lota' on each member of the family. Holi is a community event. It is one of the most joyous festivals celebrated with extraordinary zeal and enthusiasm. It is a declared public holiday in India and many countries containing significant populations of the South Asian diaspora. People light huge bonfires at community grounds to commemorate the burning of Holika, and the new life that was granted to Prahlad - the child devotee. As the fire burns brighter, people would sing Holi folk songs commonly known as Chowtal accompanied by the rhythmic beats of the drums and cymbals around the bonfires, while they seek the blessings and purity that the holy fire symbolizes. In some areas, people offer the first fruits, coconuts and harvest to the holy fire.

Holi has a theme of universal brotherhood and the Holi bonfires that are burnt on the previous night remind us of the value of true faith and devotion to God. Colors and 'gulal' are showered on people dressed in white clothes and the whole community seems to merge into one big fraternity under the guise of colors. Children use large syringes or 'pichkaris' to squirt colored water on each other and faces are smeared with color to look adorable.

The festival of Holi can also be regarded as a celebration of the Colors of universal Unity & Brotherhood - an opportunity to forget all differences and indulge in unadulterated fun. Holi is the festival of freedom from social norms and is traditionally celebrated in high spirits without any distinction of cast, creed, color, race, status or sex. It is one occasion when sprinkling of colored powder ('gulal') or colored water on each other serves to break all barriers of discrimination so that everyone looks the same and universal brotherhood is reaffirmed. It is said that on this day, people befriend even their enemies to embark on a new beginning. In this regard, the celebration of Holi transcends all barriers and embraces diversity with inclusiveness.

For a token entrance fee, Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir and Cultural Centre is



Priest and Devotees celebrating Holi 2013



Colorful end to Holi Celebration 2013



Priest Celebrating with Colored Water at Holi 2013

extending an invitation for everyone to join in the celebration of the Spring Festival of Holi at Pickering High School on Saturday March 8, 2014 commencing at 6 PM.

**For more information please contact
Pandit Rudy Tiwari at 416 846 0726
Pandit Rabindranauth Tiwari**



Youthful Pose at Holi 2013



Happy Holi



Holi Hai

Sankat Mochan Hanuman Mandir & Cultural Center

339 Westney Road, Unit 101, Ajax, ON 905-426-1119

Proudly presents

Holi Mela 2014

March 8th, 2014

Pickering High School

180 Church St N, Ajax, On

6pm to 9:30pm

\$10 Adults, \$5 Children under 12 yrs

Contact info: Pt. Rabindranath Tiwari (Pt. Rudy) 905-683-1436 Cell: 416-846-0726

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Seven Waterloo subjects ranked amongst world's top 100



Seven subjects at the University of Waterloo rank among the top 100 universities in the world, according to results published today.

The rankings, published today by UK firm Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), put Waterloo 24th in the world for its work in Computer Science and in Mathematics – second amongst Canadian universities in both subjects. It's the fourth consecutive year that Computer Science has risen in the international classification and the third year that Mathematics has risen.

Waterloo is ranked in the top 100 for Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Geography, Environmental Sciences and Statistics and Operational Research.

"I am very pleased that these rankings show the breadth of excellence in teaching and research that exists here," said Feridun Hamdullahpur, president and vice-chancellor of Waterloo. "We strive to achieve a level of academic and research excellence to meet our goal of becoming one of the world's most innovative universities."

QS ranks close to 700 universities worldwide in 30 disciplines. Waterloo is listed amongst the top 200 universities globally for 19 of the 30 subjects evaluated – with improved rankings in four subject areas.

"The University of Waterloo's Faculty of Mathematics has the largest concentration of mathematical and computer science talent in the world," said Ian Goulden, dean of mathematics. "We attract outstanding students and faculty members from around the world and I am delighted that their hard work is reflected in these results."

In 2013:

Waterloo mathematician, Jim Geelen, was among a team of researchers who solved Rota's Conjecture, a problem first posed more than 40 years ago and Maïté Dupuis of the Department of Applied

Mathematics was awarded a prestigious NSERC Banting fellowship to focus on the Quantum-Nano nexus, which is one of the University's top current research priorities.

Mathematician Chris Bauch found that applying mathematical models to what people are talking about on Facebook and Twitter could help scientists to better understand how contagious diseases spread, and how people react to outbreaks.

Waterloo also ranked 200 for English Language and Literature, Philosophy, Chemical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Psychology, Chemistry, Materials Science, Earth and Marine Sciences, Physics & Astronomy, Accounting & Finance, Politics and Sociology.

Waterloo's David R. Cheriton School of Computer Science brings together over 75 faculty, 40 staff and 2000 students at undergraduate and graduate levels. The School was founded in 1967, and has grown to become the largest academic computer science research center in Canada.

About the University of Waterloo

In just half a century, the University of Waterloo, located at the heart of Canada's technology hub, has become one of Canada's leading comprehensive universities with 35,000 full- and part-time students in undergraduate and graduate programs. Waterloo, as home to the world's largest post-secondary co-operative education program, embraces its connections to the world and encourages enterprising partnerships in learning, research and discovery. In the next decade, the university is committed to building a better future for Canada and the world by championing innovation and collaboration to create solutions relevant to the needs of today and tomorrow. For more information about Waterloo, please visit www.uwaterloo.ca.

Local startup wins Laurier competition

Waterloo Region Record

By Rose Simone

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WATERLOO — A startup software company with a tool that allows video producers to collaborate online won the Laurier Entrepreneurship Competition top prize this week.

Vidhub, the creation of a Wilfrid Laurier University student team led by co-founder Shubhagata Sengupta, is an online collaboration hub for videographers and marketing teams that produce videos.

The online hub allows them to get feedback from their clients and collaborators as the video plays. It means they spend less time dealing with emails and meetings.

The team won \$5,000 in the Laurier Entrepreneurship Competition, as well as \$3,000 worth of video services to help market their business.

The team currently has Vidhub in private beta testing, which means it is being checked out by a number of videographer teams as well as private sector and government organizations that produce videos. They are providing feedback as the hub evolves. Sengupta said the tool should be ready for a public launch in April.

Sengupta said various small companies or marketing teams that produce videos need a way to collaborate on the draft video, so that a client or collaborator can say "the sound is too quiet at 52 seconds in," or "add the logo at 48 seconds."

This will allow them to do that more efficiently, see the time-coded comments as the video plays, and cut down on the number of meetings and emails involved

in making the video, he said.

Sengupta, who is a communications student at Laurier, said Vidhub came about because he worked on video projects over the years and he was frustrated by the lack of a good collaboration tool. "Initially I wanted to build it for myself to use, to make my workflow easier," he said.

He and a friend then entered a hack-a-thon competition and won the prize for the "most monetizable" software idea. That encouraged them to continue working on it. Winning the Laurier competition is further validation, he said.

Sengupta said there are video collaboration tools on the market, but they are expensive and marketed specifically to big production studios. Vidhub will offer a tiered subscription service, ranging from free trial to a corporate-level service for organizations doing a lot of videos.

The startup is also working on a video collaboration tool for the educational market because colleges and universities have expressed an interest in something that will allow students to collaborate on video projects.

Sengupta said the team has space in the Laurier LaunchPad area at the Tannery building in Kitchener and is getting support through the Laurier innovation and entrepreneurship programs.

The second place winner was Marmabee, an e-commerce gift website aimed at "experience" gifts for children and teenagers, such as trips or tickets. The third place went to Teknically, a software-as-a-service company that focuses on solutions to make small business websites more effective.

rsimone@therecord.com



Extended-stay hotel in St. Jacobs will be a home away from home - *Homewood*

Waterloo Region Record

By Rose Simone

ST. JACOBS — The outlet malls, antique shops and the farmers market are what St. Jacobs is traditionally known for.

But increasingly, the community is also becoming a host to guests of technology companies, universities and think-tanks in Waterloo Region.

A new extended-stay hotel, Homewood Suites Waterloo St. Jacobs by Hilton, is under construction and is expected to open in June. It's on Benjamin Road, across from Jack's Restaurant.

It is part of the area's evolving "cluster" of hotels. A new 110-room Holiday Inn Express and Suites went up last year on the same road. And a 118-room Courtyard by Marriott, also on Benjamin Road, opened in 2012 after being converted from a Best Western.

The Four Points by Sheraton hotel is five minutes away, on King Street North in Waterloo.

There is also a new Delta hotel under construction on the Barrel Yards property in uptown Waterloo, at Father David Bauer Drive and Erb Street West.

That is scheduled to open this summer.

That may seem like a lot of hotels, but Meenesh Gopal, who is part of the Benjamin Hotel Inc. investor group developing Homewood Suites, said a feasibility study that was done for the project showed

a definite need for more extended-stay suites, especially with the universities, research institutions and technology companies in the area.

All the units in the four-floor, 97-room hotel have fully-furnished kitchens, including a refrigerator, a cook-top stove, a microwave and a dishwasher, he said.

About half are studio rooms with kitchen facilities, and the rest are suites including king and double-queen bedroom suites, and a couple of larger two-bedroom suites for families.

The multimillion dollar venture is a joint effort that includes Meenesh and his father Kishor (Charles) Gopal, as well as the family of Marcus Shantz, the president of Mercedes Corp., and some private investors.

The Gopal family has been in the Kitchener area hotel industry since 1976. They renovated and converted the former Comfort Inn in Kitchener into a Best Western Plus. The Shantz and Gopal families have been friends as well as partners in business.

"We think very highly of them," Shantz said.

A hotel cluster on Benjamin Road in St. Jacobs makes sense, partly because of the availability of land with the right zoning, Shantz said. But it is also a great location, he added.

"When you look at the geography of this spot, relative to all kinds of employers in the north end of Waterloo, coupled with the tourism, that should make it



Marcus Shantz, left, Charles Gopal and Meenesh Gopal are the driving forces behind the Homewood Suites in St. Jacobs.,
By: David Bebee, The Record

successful," Shantz said.

Charles Gopal said the Homewood Suites brand, now in its 25th year, has been successful for Hilton Hotels and Resorts in North America.

"They gave us the numbers and it made sense to us," he added.

The hotel will have its share of overnight and weekend guests, but its focus is to serve the people who are staying in the region for some time, Meenesh Gopal said.

He added that the hotel will also have two meeting rooms that can be opened up, for a total of 1,400 square feet of space to accommodate up to about 100 people for events, training or seminars.

Company executives, trainers, researchers with temporary positions at the universities or area think-tanks are examples of people who come into the region for periods that range from a week to several months, Gopal said.



Homewood Suites by Hilton, an extended-stay hotel on Benjamin Road, is expected to open in June

There are also families who need a place to stay while they are waiting for a house to be built or get occupancy of a new home, he added.

When people are here for extended stays, they don't necessarily want to go to a restaurant every night, Gopal said. They might prefer to buy some groceries at the St. Jacobs Farmer's Market and cook in their suite. Or, if they don't want to cook, the hotel will serve hot dinners from Monday to Thursday, as well as full breakfast through the week, he added.

This will be the second Homewood Suites in the region, but the other one is in Cambridge, Gopal said. The new hotel will have a swimming pool, exercise room, laundry facility and a patio area with barbecue stations, he added.

Shantz said the hotel will be a kilometre from the Northfield Station on the new light transit line.

Meenesh Gopal said he's already getting inquiries from people interested in booking. They like the idea of a hotel that can be "a home away from home," he added. - rsimone@therecord.com

Waterloo physicist awarded prestigious Sloan Fellowship

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation has recognized Waterloo professor, Dmitry Abanin, for his groundbreaking theoretical research in condensed matter physics of Dirac materials, such as graphene.

Thirty-two-year-old Abanin's work has resulted in a number of significant theories related to graphene and other, so called, Dirac materials that exhibit potentially game-changing properties as conductors. He was named as a recipient of a Sloan Research Fellowship today.

"For a society to really grow, it needs people who are pushing the boundaries of what's known to make new progress. Many of these ideas will enrich our understanding of the world, and some will really click and lead to something big," said Abanin. "That's why this kind of fellowship is important—it supports people who are probing the edges of knowledge. It will help me, my group, and our research go further."

Graphene, a single layer of carbon, is a newer crystalline material that is no thicker than a single atom but stronger than a layer of steel at the same thickness. It has important applications for medicine, integrated circuits, solar cells and superconductors.

For the next decade, Abanin has



mapped out an ambitious, field-leading research program that aims to develop a universal theory of phenomena in Dirac materials. Such a comprehensive theory is essential to the future development of nano-electronics and spintronics applications, which are expected to transform the future of technology.

"Several of Abanin's theoretical predictions have been confirmed experimentally, which is a remarkable achievement for a physicist so early in his career," said Terrance McMahan, dean of science at Waterloo. "We are very proud that Dmitry has been recognized for his transfor-

mational research and ideas."

For more than a half-century, the prestigious Sloan Research Fellowships have been awarded annually to the rising stars of science in Canada and the United States, helping establish them as the next generation of scientific leaders in areas spanning physics, chemistry, biology, and related disciplines. Fellows receive \$50,000 to further their research.

Abanin is a faculty member at the Perimeter Institute. He also holds an adjunct professorship in Physics and Astronomy at the University of Waterloo and is an associate faculty member of

Waterloo's Institute for Quantum Computing (IQC).

He joined Perimeter in 2013 following postdoctoral research positions at Harvard and Princeton. He has worked alongside Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov whose groundbreaking research on graphene was awarded the 2010 Nobel Prize in Physics.

Abanin is the twelfth Waterloo researcher to be awarded a Sloan Fellowship since the 1960s. Professor Matteo Mariani, also from the Department of Physics and Astronomy and IQC, won a Sloan Fellowship in 2013.



Regional News



WHITBY'S COMMUNITY DIVERSITY SURVEY RESULTS

The demographics of the Whitby community are continuing to change as demonstrated by the following statistics from the 2011 Census:

- 8.3 percent of the population of Whitby are newcomers (immigrating between 2006–2011); Whitby has the highest percent of new immigrants of all the Durham municipalities;
- One in five Whitby residents are immigrants;
- Over 16 percent of Whitby residents speak a language in the home other than English or French.

The Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee (EDAC) conducted a community survey to gain a better understanding of the diversity needs of the community, the barriers residents face related to culture and diversity and potential solutions to eliminating those barriers.

There were 460 individuals who completed the Community Diversity Survey. The following is a summary of the main findings of the Survey.

- 71 percent of respondents feel a strong sense of belonging to the Whitby community.
- 78 percent of respondents felt there were no barriers that prevented them from feeling a sense of belonging.
- Of the 22 percent who indicated there are barriers that prevent them from feeling a sense of belonging, the most commonly listed barriers were culture, income, ethnicity, skin colour, language and country of birth.
- 65 percent of respondents agree that Whitby is a diverse community (22 percent were unsure and 13 percent disagreed).
- 58 percent agreed that the Whitby community embraces culture and diversity (34 percent were unsure and 9 percent disagreed).
- The most common suggestion to bring more inclusiveness and celebration to the Town of Whitby is an increase in cultural festivals.
- 78 percent of respondents have not experienced any prejudice or discrimination in the Town of Whitby.
- Of the 22 percent who have experienced prejudice or discrimination, the most common factors were skin colour, ethnicity, culture and country of birth.
- The most common locations that this prejudice or discrimination was experienced included school, shopping centres, finding employment, recreation facilities and in the work place.
- 27 percent of respondents indicated that the cultural and diversity attributes of their neighbourhood played a factor in where they chose to live.

Overall, the responses to the Survey are very positive and demonstrate that residents feel Whitby is a diverse and welcoming community. The Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee has responded to the survey results by incorporating the feedback into their 2014 Work Plan.

To respond to the communities request to offer additional festivals and cultural events, the Ethno-cultural and Diversity Advisory Committee will be partnering with the Brooklin Optimist Club and Whitby Youth Council to host World Fest-Whitby.

World Fest-Whitby will take place on Saturday, May 3 at the McKinney Centre, 222 McKinney Drive from 2:00–7:00 p.m. This event will be open to the community and will focus on showcasing the culture and diversity in our community through our youth and community partners.

Additionally, EDAC will be working with Harbour Day Committee to assist in increasing the cultural

celebration of this event which will take place on July 26 at Port Whitby Marina. For more information on the initiatives of EDAC, please visit www.whitby.ca/diversity.

SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY SURVEY

The Town of Whitby is undertaking a Sports Facility Strategy to guide the development of indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The project is designed to assess current and future needs over the next 20 years, while evaluating the ability of existing facilities to accommodate changing demands.

Public consultation is a key component of this study. All interested citizens are invited to share their ideas and comments on this project by filling out an online survey found at www.whitby.ca/sfs under the heading Sports Facility Strategy online survey.

The online survey's individual responses will be kept confidential. The information you provide in this survey will contribute to a greater understanding of local participation and priorities.

Personal information is collected under the authority of Section 11 of the Municipal Act, 2001 and will be used for information purposes only for this project. Questions regarding the collection and use of personal information should be directed to the Town of Whitby Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Office at 905.430.4300.

For more information on the strategy, please contact Aimee Pugao, Parks Planner, by phone at 905.430.4300 x7419 or by email at pugaoa@whitby.ca.

REGISTRATION OPEN: WHITBY SUMMER CAMPS

This summer the Town of Whitby is again offering Whitby residents and the surrounding area quality programming for children and youth. Don't miss out on these amazing programs. Participants will have a fabulous time, meet new friends and keep active and they will also develop the following life skills thought their camp experience:

Life Skill #1: How to Get Along with Others

Camp provides the opportunity to develop social skills, through interacting with other children and camp staff in a positive and fun environment.

Life Skill #2: How to Be Your Best

Camp provides kids the opportunity to be kids, try new challenges, build their independence, resilience and self esteem in a safe, supervised and supportive environment.

Life Skill #3: How to Get in Shape

Camp provides an abundance of physical activity for kids although it is often disguised in the form of fun and games allowing campers to adopt a healthy lifestyle, without even realizing it!

Life Skill #4: How to Be a Leader

Camp provides experiential education where kids learn to be a leader through play, mentorship and programmed activities that develop self esteem and confidence.

Inclusion Services

Inclusion Services counsellors are available for campers with special needs at the Brooklin

Community Centre and Library, Cullen Central Park and Iroquois Park Sports Centre locations. Applications must be submitted prior to registration for inclusion services and is only available for Whitby Residents.

Locations and Camps

- Brooklin Community Centre and Library
- Brooklin Kinder Camp (ages 3–5)
- Brooklin Kidz Camp (ages 6–9)
- Brooklin Adventure Camp (ages 10–13)
- Brooklin Counsellor in Training Camp (ages 13–17)

Cullen Central Park

- Cullen Kritter Kinder Camp (ages 3–5)
- Cullen Outdoor Kidz Camp (ages 6–9)
- Cullen Outdoor Adventure Camp (ages 10–13)
- Cullen Day trippers Camp (ages 8–17)

Iroquois Park Sports Centre

- Multi Sport Camp (ages 6–12)
- Multi Sport Counsellor in Training Camp (ages 13–16)

Fire Department Headquarters

- Junior Firefighter Program (ages 11–12)
- Community Connection Camps

John Dryden

- Day Camp (ages 5–13)
- Sports Camp (ages 6–13)
- Young Chefs' Camp (ages 7–13)
- Kinder Camp (ages 3–5)
- Counsellor in Training Program (ages 13–17)
- Camp for Children with Special Needs (ages 4–14)

Ormiston

- Day Camp (ages 5–13)
- Arts & Crafts Camp (ages 6–13)
- Kinder Camp (ages 3–5)
- Counsellor in Training Program (ages 13–17)

Registration

Registration can be completed online through Smart Link or in person. All information can also be found in the Town of Whitby Summer Activity Guide via www.whitby.ca/activityguide.

Further information on Town of Whitby camp programs can be found at www.whitby.ca/camps.

MARCH BREAK ACTIVITIES

For a full list of March Break activities, please visit www.whitby.ca/calendar.

March Events

www.whitby.ca/calendar

Event Name	Location	Time
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Thursday, March 6	1:00–3:30 p.m.
Whitby Hydro Free Public Skate	Friday, March 7	1:00–3:00 p.m.
Youth Dance	Friday, March 7	7:00–10:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting of Council	Monday, March 10	7:00 p.m.
March Break Activities	March 10–14	various
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Thursday, March 13	1:00–3:30 p.m.
Committee of Adjustment Meeting	Thursday, March 13	7:00 p.m.
Planning and Development Committee Meeting	Tuesday, March 17	7:00 p.m.
Management Committee Meeting	Tuesday, March 18	2:00 p.m.
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Thursday, March 20	1:00–3:30 p.m.
Operations Committee Meeting	Monday, March 24	7:00 p.m.
Newcomers Welcome Program for Seniors	Thursday, March 27	1:00–3:30 p.m.
Youth Dance	Friday, March 28	7:00–10:00 p.m.
Regular Meeting of Council	Monday, March 31	7:00 p.m.

MARKHAM



Regional News

MARKHAM FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES LAUNCHES 2014 RECRUITMENT DRIVE

THE CITY SEEKS MORE THAN FIFTEEN NEW PROBATIONARY FIREFIGHTERS

Markham Fire and Emergency Services has launched its 2014 Probationary Firefighter Recruitment Campaign – Think You Can Fill These Boots? Online application submissions are being accepted from Friday, February 21 until noon on Thursday, March 13, 2014.

Markham Fire and Emergency Services is recruiting a minimum of 15 Probationary Firefighters. There are a number of phases in the recruitment process beginning with the online application submission, followed by a written aptitude test, formal interviews, fitness testing, medical screening and reference checks.

“We are proud of the fact that Markham is one of the most diverse and inclusive communities in Canada,” said Fire Chief Bill Snowball. “We encourage candidates from all walks of life to apply.”

To be considered a viable candidate for the position of probationary firefighter, applicants must:

- be 18 years of age or older;
- have an Ontario Secondary School Diploma or equivalent; be eligible to work in Canada (citizen/landed immigrant);

- have no criminal record;
- hold a Standard First Aid and CPR level HCP (for Health Care Providers) certificate; and
- have a valid Ontario Class “G” driver’s licence with no demerit points.

“Our campaign slogan asks potential candidates if they think they can fill these boots,” said Snowball. “If their answer is yes, we encourage them to take the first step and apply for the opportunity to become a member of our team.”

Successful candidates will enjoy a challenging and rewarding career that includes rescue work, fire prevention duties, administering first aid, and responding to emergency hazardous material situations, in addition to providing firefighting services and doing maintenance work.

To learn more about the position requirements, the application and selection process, and what it takes to be a Probationary Firefighter, visit www.markham.ca/firefighter.

Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti:
fscarpitti@markham.ca or 905-475-4872

About Markham Fire and Emergency Services:

Markham Fire and Emergency Services is a community organization currently operating 11 front run apparatus from nine fire stations. The organization employs about 280 women and men who work in the divisions of Fire Prevention/Public Education, Communications, Training, Mechanical, Suppression and Administration.

About Markham:

Markham, a municipality with more than 330,000 residents centrally located in the Greater Toronto area, is home to 400 corporate head offices and 900 high tech and life science companies. Founded in the 1790s, today Markham is Canada’s most diverse community, enjoys a rich heritage, outstanding community planning and services, and a vibrant local economy. Canada’s newest urban city as of July 1, 2012, Markham has received the Excellence Canada PEP III Integrated and Accessibility Awards, and multiple heritage and environmental awards.

FIREFIGHTER RECRUITMENT

Recruiting probationary firefighters
February 21 to March 13

APPLY NOW



MARKHAM LAUNCHES AIM TO SUSTAIN YOUTH CONTEST YOUTH ENCOURAGED TO SHARE IDEAS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Markham has launched its Aim to Sustain Contest for Youth, which encourages Markham residents and students aged 21 and under to share ideas of a sustainable Markham through art, stories, photographs or poetry.

Markham has a commitment to be one of the most sustainable cities in North America, including achieving net zero energy, water, waste and emissions by 2050. Greenprint, Markham’s Community Sustainability Plan, outlines Markham Council’s commitments and direction.

This new contest aims to enhance youth awareness of and support for community sustainability, and to gather future generation ideas for sustainability.

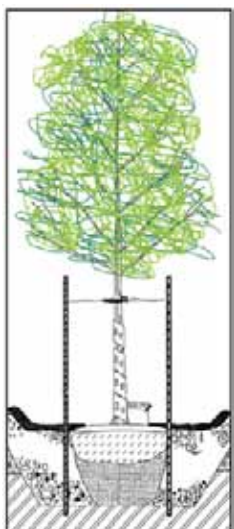
Mayor Frank Scarpitti said, “Markham youth are environmentally active in our community through zero waste school lunch programs, tree plantings, home recycling, and so many other ways. I am really proud of the awards that we’ve won. I invite every Markham youth to submit new ideas of how we can make Markham even more sustainable for

generations to come.”

Youth are encouraged to offer their ideas by March 31, 2014. Winners will receive a special recognition plaque and prize package of sustainability products and Markham Community Centre recreation activity passes or Flato Markham Theatre tickets.

For more information about the submission requirements and the entry form, please visit markham.ca or contact 905-477-7000 ext. 3542 or email at wrupnarain@markham.ca.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP MAINTAIN YOUR BOULEVARD TREES



Residents may not undertake any work on trees situated on the road allowance adjacent to their homes. However, residents are encouraged to maintain the health of these boulevard trees.

- 1) Water your tree during dry periods and just prior to winter freeze-up. A soaker hose is an effective method to ensure slow percolation.
- 2) Mulch at the base of the tree is an excellent way to promote a healthy root zone while preventing mechanical damage. Avoid mounding soil up against the trunk of the tree. Organic mulch placed 5 to 8 cm deep around the tree is recommended.
- 3) If your tree is newly planted, please do not remove any stakes that have been placed around your tree. They help keep your tree straight until the root system is fully developed.
- 4) Please do not remove or prune Markham trees (pursuant to Bylaw 68-92 [PDF]). Trees in new developments are planted under the direction of the Development Services Commission 905-475-4861. Trees in older neighbourhoods are maintained by the Markham Urban Forestry at 905-415-7535.

SUSIE GARDEN PROGRAM RECOGNITION FORM

The Susie Garden Program is an annual recognition program to acknowledge and recognise the contribution of the many beautiful front gardens across the City that help to beautify our neighbourhoods; help sustain important pollinators and are to be admired by all.

To register a much admired front garden, please visit: www.markham.ca & click the following: Environmental Leadership, Susie Garden Program, Susie Nomination Form & complete the form and check to see that all required fields are filled.

Registration deadline is July 24, 2014.

If you experience problems with this form please contact

webmaster@markham.ca





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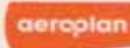
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