

Souvenir 2009

St Patrick's College, Jaffna

Alumni Association

United Kingdom

Editorial

God became man for man's reconciliation with God

I am not as a rule prone to day dreaming or spending time on philosophical contemplation. Strangely, however walking out of my house on a very wet and windy Sunday in November I found myself taking in the scenery with rather very different thoughts.

There were golden yellow leaves on the ground some in different states of decay, others looking still fresh lying in heaps or blown together by the blustery wind or lying scattered all over the place.

The tree had shed most of its leaves. There were however a few still on the tree hanging down lazily from its branches. Strangely I noticed one leaf spinning round a couple of times in one direction and then responding to the wind direction, spinning in the opposite direction, still attached to the branch. How did the leaf still remain attached to the branch. I wondered then, were the leaves still trying to cling on to the branches or was the tree still holding on refusing to abandon them.

Under foot it was all slippery where there was stagnant water and wet leaves. It was a depressing site with little to provide any cheer. All that remained for the leaves was the arrival of the road sweeper to come and sweep them away. The road it seems was waiting to be swept clear.

But standing in that mire with nothing to make one feel good, I looked up into the sky. The sun was out, the beautiful azure blue sky provided instant cheer. There across the sky were a few clumps of cloud gently floating across the sky. They did not seem to be particularly rushed across by the wind that seemed to hurry the leaves on the ground.

It was difficult not to appreciate the contradiction: standing in just one spot feeling depressed and elated at the same time.

I never know why I reacted in that manner. Perhaps it was the fact that I had just put the finishing touches to the Christmas editorial I had written for the Patrician web site. My thoughts understandably were depressing. The conditions on the ground and the denuded trees flashed before my eyes the fate of those suffering in the camps. The thought that two nations that had lived in peace for centuries had decided to destroy each other was saddening. The wind of hatred, the shells fired from the rockets killing indiscriminately heaping the dead bodies of those families who had gathered to be together or people who had gathered together under some flimsy protection. Yet others caught individually as they fled to seek refuge where there was none. Just wilderness interspersed with

a few trees. Yet others who had not been hit by the bullets and the shrapnel clinging to each other, held together with a bond of love and fear. The mother holding that terror stricken infant wriggling in her arms, unaware of the destruction that awaited it and wanting to be free. Confidence of the people had plummeted and there had been a seismic explosion that had scattered them apart. Their bodies would not even be gathered to be given a burial, a fate worse than that of the leaves.

Where in all this is the cheer I experienced. The cheer was to lie in the anticipated peace. The peace that the Christ child born in a manger brought to this world. Will those still seeking to destroy a nation realise that peace cannot be achieved through hatred. Peace cannot be achieved through subjugation. Peace cannot be achieved through revenge. Peace needs to be through negotiations. Peace needs to be through reconciliation. God became man for man's reconciliation with God. Could man shed his pride and seek to be reconciled to each other. There is no better time to think of peace and forgiveness than at Christmas time. The unity of the Holy Family should serve as a model for all.

While the defeated nation stretches out its hand in peace let it be remembered by the rest of the country that the Tamil people want peace with justice. Peace with dignity. May god grant peace and harmony for the people of Sri Lanka.

The patricians wish you everyone a peaceful new Year filled with hope for the future.

Dr A E A Joseph

Message from the Bishop of Jaffna

Once again the SPC Alumni Association UK is organizing the Christmas get together and I am happy to send this brief message. We are very proud that you are very loyal to your College and work hard to realize some of the needed projects for the development of the College. Nearly 60,000 of the IDPS have come to Jaffna Peninsula and many schools have admitted the children from the camps to their schools. The St Patrick's College also has its quota of students to take care of. Hence your efforts to assist this project is praiseworthy.



Wishing you all success with your annual get together. God bless you all.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Savundaranayagam
Bishop of Jaffna

Message from the President

Dear Members and well wishers,

Once again, it is with great pleasure, I welcome you all to our annual Dinner Dance, our major fund raising event of the year. We are dedicating this function to raise fund mainly to support the students from the Vanni IDP camps.

As in general, like the rest of the world, we also had our share of difficulties due to the prolonged credit crunch and the recession of the economy. We saw our earnings dropped from our perpetual fund due to the low interest rate and some well wishers had difficulties in donating as much as in the past. Despite of all these difficulties, we had not done too badly in the field of fund raising and helping our Alma Mater. I am proud to say that our Alma Mater received the most donations from our Association than any of the other St. Patrick's Associations around the world. I am so proud to be the head of such a tireless and enthusiastic association.

Our association has several sub committees and all the committee members and some dedicated members form part of these sub committees. All these sub committee members have given up their own quality time for the growth of the association. I thank them all for their selfless contribution for the growth of the association.

The association has three main aims. The first and the foremost is to raise fund for the Perpetual Fund. Secondly, but as important as the first one, is to contribute as much as possible for the growth and development of the Alma Mater. Third and final one is to increase the membership of the association. Apart from these aims we are also concentrating on developing our web site, hence developing our communication with our members more efficiently and economically. We are also focusing on attracting our younger generation in helping the association as they are the future of this association. You will see that quite evident in this function.

Please read Treasurer's report for what we have done for our Alma Mater through this current year. Our association can't function and achieve our aims without your support and help. We appreciate tremendously & we are grateful of your continuing support. Please dick deep as every penny you contribute in this function will be sent for the education and welfare of the unfortunate students of the IDP camp.

Finally, I wish you all a very enjoyable evening and a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Dr. N.R.Rubakumar

GREETINGS FROM THE RECTOR



Dear Patricians in UK,

I am pleased to convey my warmest seasonal greetings to you on the occasion of Annual Christmas Gathering.

I am indeed privileged to have a very strong supportive Alumni membership in the United Kingdom. Your valuable assistance to the academic development of the college is much praiseworthy. You have helped to obtain new Quality Input equipments to enhance teaching learning activities in a higher order process.

Although the year 2009 dawned in the aftermath the devastation of 'Nisha' Cyclone, we were able to do the renovation immediately and start our school year 2009 smoothly. I wish to express my sincere thanks for the prompt support given by the Alumni in the United Kingdom for their major contribution for renovation.

Even though we are proud of some of our achievements this year, the urgency of helping our brethren returning from the Vanni detention camps, becomes our prior concern. In the recent months, we have recruited 95 children who returned from Vanni camps. We are in the process of selecting deserving students who have lost their breadwinners in the last phase of the war. They will be accommodated in the college hostel in 2010 under the sponsorship of our Alumni. The priests who continue to serve among the Vanni people will help us to select these needy children.

While thanking you for your unstinted support to the college, we pray that God may continue to bless you and your families for your loyalty and dedication to your Alma Mater.

I wish you Merry Christmas and a Bright New Year 2010.

Rev. Fr. M. Jero Selvanayagam B.Th(Rome), M.A(Ed.Mgt) (London).
RECTOR

Tamil Catholic Chaplain

"People who walked in the darkness has seen the great light."

Dear Patricians,

It gives me a great pleasure to wish my fellow patrician family a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

'People who walked in the darkness has seen the great light' Christ came as the light of the world.

This year has been a very sorrowful year for us the Tamils. We paid a heavy price for our freedom. So many of us have lost our family members and freedom fighters. Nearly 300.000 people were displaced and put in IDP camps. They came from Vanni as empty people even without a piece of cloth for a change. So many were wounded and some lost their limbs. Our children became orphans and left in camps without education.

At this juncture I approached the OBAs and OGAs to work along with chaplaincy to help our people in IDP camps. I am proud of my OBA and its members who have responded well. When I spoke to Fr. Rector he said that he has already started to admit the children from Vanni.

Christ said ' you are the light of the world'. When we celebrate the feast of this great Light let us come together to dispel the darkness of our people. I urge all my fellow patricians to extend our helping hands to the needy. Our Tamil Bishops, Fathers and Nuns are doing their best to comfort the people. Let us be proud of the Tamil church and Our Alma Matter.

Maybe this Christmas bring Peace to our families in diaspora and families in our homeland.

Rev Fr. S. Eugene Francis

Tamil Catholic Chaplain and Vice Patron

Secretary's report for the year 2008/2009.

It is my pleasure to present this report on the activities achievements and future plans of St. Patrick's College Jaffna, Alumni Association U.K. for the year 2008/09.

*'Little drops of water, little grains of sand,
makes the mighty ocean and the pleasant land'.*

First and foremost duty of mine is to thank our members and donors alike for their generous contributions throughout the year. All your gifts, great and small are equally welcomed and appreciated by the executive committee.

Since the last AGM on the 08th December 2007 the executive committee met 8 times during the term in office. The meetings were very productive and constructive. The decisions were made democratically, were respected and carried through unanimously. The meetings were held at the Northolt Community Village Hall, Ealing Road, Northolt, Middlesex, and all credit go to every member of the executive committee for their dedication to the association. It is their dedication and hard work that has enabled the association to grow from strength to strength over the years in helping the College at these uncertain times. We are fortunate to have a blend of such vibrant and enthusiastic body of Ex-Co. members.

This year our President was determined to make the functioning of the sub-committees more efficient. Sub committees were assigned specific tasks and were asked to report at every meeting. Though not perfected, substantial progress has been made in improving the efficiency of each sub committee.

The increased efficiency and greater involvement by the sub-committees have enhanced the decision making process and saved invaluable time for the Ex. Co. All the decisions that were made at sub-committees level were tabled at the executive committee meetings for approval. This year following sub committees were formed. Finance, Membership, Publication, Web development and Sports. This year Board of Trustees took office in September. The PPF deed was signed and first meeting of the trustees was convened in September. The trustees sanctioned £3000 to be distributed to college form the income received from investments of the Patrician Perpetual Funs. This was the first distribution ever made from the PPF.

Prior to submitting the sub committee reports I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr Chris Ponnukone who is stepping down from the committee after many years of dedicated service. So sincere is his dedication he had taken up the responsibility to be the Web Master to maintain our website. He will be badly missed. We also say temporary good bye to Mr Jude Antony who is also stepping down. Jude as Chairman of the Web Development Committee had wonderful plans to upgrade our website, due to family commitments he is unable continue but had also agreed work with the committee from outside. We keep the door open for his return.

Sub-committee Reports

Finance:

Chairman: -Mr. Joseph Edirimanasinghe

As Chairman of the Finance Committee and as Treasurer of the association Mr Joseph Edirimanasinghe will present his own report on future finance strategy and achievements during the year. It is my duty to thank him for his dedication and precision with which he handles the financial affairs of the association. The word 'pedantic' would be an insult to him if I were to describe his quality work.

Membership:

Chairman: - Mr. Joseph Vetha Louis

The membership register now consists of 238 members including 52 life members, 166 general members, 7 USA members, 6 Members migrated (Canada/Aus) and 7 expired.

Finance committee and the membership committee worked very closely this year with the aim of maximising the income of the association. With regret I report that the income from subscriptions had fallen to alarming levels. Jointly they have identified the problems and taken steps to rectify it. Some of you may have been contacted by them regarding missing subscriptions. Please don't take it personally; they were only trying to do their job in the interest of the College and the association. I would urge those members who have been contacted by them to cooperate with them to resolve the issues.

It is the resolve of the membership committee to double the membership in the next 3 - 5 years. They are in the process of restructuring the ways the members are take care of for by the Ex-Co. More details to emerge in time to come. I thank them for their valuable work.

Publication:

Chairman: - Mr. A. Dominic

This year we published our spring .newsletter in March and the Autumn one in December. We did not publish a souvenir for our Autumn Ball instead we went the hi-tec and greener way to go electronic. As you may know that the Patrician web page is fully functional & the address of which is <http://www.patrician.org>. It is the aim of the publication committee to go greener through our web to communicate interactively with Patrician's world over. Thank you Mr Dominic and members of the publication committee

Sports:

Chairman: - Mr. Edwin Gunaratnam

We took part in TSSA Football Tournament held during May bank holiday. Though our team didn't succeed our participation was very much appreciated by the community. Thank you team.

It is to every one's surprise our Cricket team won the TSSA August bank holiday cricket tournament. Well done Mr Mike Seemampillai and the team (I prefer to call them Mike & the mechanics). I also congratulate the chairman and his vice for their efforts.

Social & Hospitality:

This committee was abolished since the last special general meeting and was replaced by event organisers. Mr Chelva Sabapathy and Mr Siva Sathianathan took sole charge of our Autumn Ball. Mr Xavier Manuelpillai and Me Edwin Gunaratnam took charge of St Patrick's day function today. My sincere thanks to all of them.

Co-ordinating the welfare of the college:

Chairman: - Mr S K Sathianathan.

Due to reorganisation of this function this was taken over by the President. I expect his report to give more information on College welfare.

Special Projects 2008.

Cyclone "Nisha" ravaged the war torn North of Sri Lanka this year. The Ex-Co launched a special appeal towards cyclone damage repairs. I must say even though the response wasn't overwhelming, we managed to raise £2,998 to date towards this project.

This year we also started 'Slone Robinson Year5 special teaching aid' project sponsored by Slone Robinson Investments Ltd. They have contributed substantial amounts towards the project in the past two years. This project is to provide additional teaching materials to prepare underprivileged year 5 students for the national scholarship exams. I take this opportunity to thank Slone Robinson Investments and the young Patricians who canvassed the donation successfully. I wish them all the success in this uncertain economic climate.

Future Plans.

The association endeavours continuously to improve the Patrician Spirit among the Patricians globally. In the coming year we plan to link all the Alumni's around the Globe for information and experience sharing.

As the numbers Patricians coming to settle in the UK is dwindling, we have plans to recruit children of the Patricians over the age of 18 as associate members. Please encourage your children to support us.

We are also exploring many non traditional ways of raising funds. Parachute jump by Kajan Singarayer was a great success and raised over £3000. This year our ex president Dilip Tisseverasinghe has come forward run a half

marathon under the banner 'JUSTGIVING' to raise funds for the Association. The run will take place in Reading Berkshire on Sunday 29th March. A pledge form will be circulated among the members present here and I would urge all the members to sponsor him generously. You can contribute on line by visiting www.justgiving.com/Dilip. We wish him every success.

Plans are underway to produce a brochure of the association to raise funds. Our main focus is to approach the corporate sector. We have consulted professional fundraisers and they have highly recommended the brochure. If the organisation you work for has a charity budget please give us an introduction to approach them.

I pray the uncertainties surrounding the College and the students will soon come to a peaceful end and wish the College and the alumni all the success in the coming years.

May God bless you all.

Joseph G Rajmohan
Hon Secretary

Treasurer's report:

The Executive committee has drawn up an ambitious financial plan to generate £39,000 for the year 2009/10. The sub-committees are working tirelessly over these few months with a view to achieving their targets. Sub-committee performances have improved cash collections and the general moral within the Exco. So far we have generated a tidy sum of £17,500 this year and by the end of this Christmas function we anticipate a record net collection, building up the sum to £21,000.

The highlights of the financial activities this year was Mr W Dilip Tisseverasinghe's sponsored half marathon in March 2009. This single event generated a mammoth £5,885. This was collected through the mainstream 'JUSTGIVING' who sponsored the event. I on behalf of the Exco wish to thank all those who generously dug deep into their pockets to support Dilip's fund raising efforts for his Alma Mater.

M/s. Sloane Robinson Investments Services Limited have supported our drive to help the deserving children at SPC and have contributed a sum of £4,300 this year. We have since then received a request from the Rector to sponsor 25 deserving students recruited from the IDP camps in Sri Lanka whom he has taken refuge of, to foster under the wings of SPC. The Exco is considering to sponsor the project and will be taking a decision shortly. Meanwhile members are kindly requested to volunteer to contribute SLRs 71,000 or **£300** per child (if you are a UK tax payer or £390 if otherwise) over the next 18 months. I am willing to accept payment in one or more installments as long as the installment(s) is / are received within the next 18 months. We also wish to thank all those who have pledged to support the cause thus far.

The subscriptions from general, life and associate members received this year was encouraging. We wish you to extend your support in the same spirit to build up the long overdue perpetual fund. We have assigned a shortlist of names to each Exco member who will be your 'account manager' to liaise between yourself and the Exco on all matters whether it be Subs, tickets, donations, raffles etc. The Exco places great confidence on you and with your co-operation we will achieve the perpetual fund target of £250,000 in a few years time.

We wish you have a lovely evening and wish each and every one of you a Merry Christmas.

Joseph Edirimanasinghe

Treasurer – SPCAAUK

12th December 2009

Executive Committee 2009



Seated: H Singrarayer, Dr A Joseph, J Rajmohan (Secretary),
Dr N Rubakumar (President),
J Edirimanasinghe (Treasurer), Dr A Sandrasagra, A Dominic

Standing: X Manuelpillai, V Louis, C Sabapathy, E Guneratnam, T Emmanuel,
S K Sathianathan

Absent: J Arulandan, Dr M Pathmarajah, R Ramo, D Joseph

Highlights of 2009 at the College

76 percent of G.C.E. O/L students passed their examination successfully and continue their studies in the Advanced Level classes.

14 students got through the Grade 5 State scholarship examination and are entitled to special scholarship in their further studies at the college.

30 students entered Sri Lankan Universities for various academic disciplines. The Under 19 Cricket team was awarded as the best team in the Northern Province.

17 Gold medals 13 Silver medals were secured by the Patricians at the Provincial Athletic Meet.

Mr. P. A. A. Benchalaw, our Physics teacher was awarded First place in the Software competition at Provincial level and is invited to do a presentation at the Ministry of Education soon.

The under 19 soccer team went up to the pre quarter finals of the national school soccer tournament.

Mas. Ajith Darwin (Grade 10) was awarded as the Best Bowler of under 15 cricket tournament conducted island wide.

Mas. S. Chelvanithilan (Grade 12) was awarded Gold medals at physics and mathematics Olympiad competition.

Under 'Maga Neguma' scheme, Internal Road was laid by the National Road Development Authority.

Hon. Duglas Devanantha, Minister of Social Service and Social Welfare, visited the College.

Sri Lanka Cricket Association, UK, is donating Cricket equipments to the college on December 7th, under the recommendation of Major General G. A. Chandrsiri, the Governor of Northern Province.

Mrs. John Ariyathas, a member of the tutorial staff, was felicitated on the Teachers day, for her 25 years of teaching at the college.

Rev. Fr. M. Jero Selvanayagam.

RECTOR

Cryptic Clues

Have you ever wondered whether it is safe to give your credit card number to Amazon? Or logging into your bank account whether a snooper is going to intercept your password?

Amazon, your bank and their likes are secure sites. They employ encryption of sensitive data before it leaves your PC to be transmitted over the internet. This encrypted data will not make any sense before it is decrypted. Hence, the snoopers will not be able to make use of the data unless they can decrypt it. Of course, to make decryption impossible by unauthorised parties, the encryption technique must be robust – not easily cracked.

When I was in school, I invented an encryption of assigning a number to each letter in the English alphabet: A =1, B = 2, etc. I thought I had invented an unbreakable code, only to find that my friend cracked a coded message in no time! For an encryption to be effective, the scheme must be hard to break.

Remember Bletchley Park – during World War II, Germans were using a code generated by the Enigma machine to send messages to their submarines, and the British at Bletchley Park were using Colossus trying to break the coded messages. The British did succeed, but it took them two weeks to break one code, by which time the Germans had changed that code to something new! A modern PC could break such a code in a few hours! So, the point is - any coding scheme is breakable, given proper technology and time. Hence current schemes find ways of making the coding complex enough to need enormous resources or an impractically very long time to break it. Seen the mention of 128 bit encryption, 256 bit encryption by the online vendors and banks? Even a modern powerful computer, will take months to crack a 128 bit encryption – if not years!

To summarise – encryption scheme must be complex enough to discourage attempts to break it.

Another problem in encryption is, the encryption method must be communicated by the receiver to the sender, so that the sender can use it to encrypt the message. Sending the method over the internet begs the question –can it not be intercepted?.

Three guys, Ron Rivest, Adi Shamir, and Len Adleman proposed a scheme that is currently used extensively. This overcomes the above problems – the scheme is complex and no information about the encryption needs to be sent. The scheme is named RSA encryption after the authors.

Take the scenario that I want to send an encrypted message to my friend Bert. First I obtain 2 numbers – say 47 and 91, from Bert. These numbers are chosen according to RSA mathematics. RSA can only encrypt numbers, not letters. So Bert also supplies me an encoding method of coding letters to

numbers – something more complex than my $A=1$, $B=2$, etc. The pair of numbers – 47 and 91 - is known as the public key of Bert – any one can obtain this public key and the encoding method from Bert's web site! I use this public key, encrypt my message using RSA method, and send it to Bert. Now Bert has a third number 23, which is his private key, not known to any one except to Bert. Bert decrypts my message – using RSA method - but this time using his private key – hey presto! the message gets decrypted – thanks to RSA. Without the private key, it is practically impossible to decrypt the encrypted message. Note that the private key is never sent over the internet.

Of course, the private key 23 is mathematically related to the public key 47 and 91, hence we must be able to deduce 23 from 47 and 91. I say "deduce", because RSA mathematics of deriving 23, 47 and 91 is irreversible! Hence I need to "guess" 23. i.e. One way of guessing is to use a trial and error method - encrypt a message using 47 and 91, then decrypt using 1. If no success, try 2, then 3 etc. When I hit 23, the message decrypts correctly! To counteract this, RSA proposes to use large numbers – 39 digits (128 bits) or 78 digits (256 bits). And, the numbers must be primes – divisible by no other number except by one and itself – 23, 47, 91 are primes. Then the guessing game will take years even with a modern powerful computer!

From the above illustration, you should be now confident that sending secure information is perfectly safe, provided the web site is a secure one. That a web site is secure is indicated by its web address starting with "https" – not just "http", and a padlock symbol either on the top or bottom of the screen.

Chris Ponnukone

Any questions? email me thru our website – www.patrician.org.uk

MOUSE TRAP STORY

A mouse looked through the crack in the wall to see the farmer and his wife open a package. What food might this contain?' The mouse wondered - he was devastated to discover it was a mousetrap. retreating to the farmyard, the mouse proclaimed the warning:

There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!' The chicken clucked and scratched, raised her head and said, ' Mr. Mouse, I can tell this is a grave concern to you, but it is of no consequence to me.

I cannot be bothered by it.'

The mouse turned to the pig and told him:

'There is a mousetrap in the house!

There is a mousetrap in the house!' The pig sympathized, but said, I am so very sorry, Mr. Mouse, but there is nothing I can do about it but pray. Be assured you are in my prayers.'

The mouse turned to the cow and said

'There is a mousetrap in the house! There is a mousetrap in the house!' The cow said, 'Wow, Mr. Mouse. I'm sorry for you, but it's no skin off my nose.' So, the mouse returned to the house, head down and dejected, to face the farmer's mousetrap alone. That very night a sound was heard throughout the house -- like the sound of a mousetrap catching its prey. The farmer's wife rushed to see what was caught. In the darkness, she did not see it was a venomous snake whose tail the trap had caught. The snake bit the farmer's wife. The farmer rushed her to the hospital, and she returned home with a fever. Everyone knows you treat a fever with fresh chicken soup, so the farmer took his hatchet to the farmyard for the soup's main ingredient. But his wife's sickness continued, so friends and neighbors came to sit with her around the clock. To feed them, the farmer butchered the pig. The farmer's wife did not get well; she died. So many people came for her funeral, the farmer had the cow slaughtered to provide enough meat for all of them. The mouse looked upon it all from his crack in the wall with great sadness. So, the next time you hear someone is facing a problem and think it doesn't concern you, remember -- when one of us is threatened, we are all at risk. We are all involved in this journey called life. We must keep an eye out for one another and make an extra effort to encourage one another.

TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHO PLAYED AN IMPORTANT PART IN YOUR LIFE OR WHO HAS EVER HELPED YOU OUT AND LET THEM KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THEY ARE.

REMEMBER,,,,,

EACH OF US IS A VITAL THREAD IN ANOTHER PERSON'S TAPESTRY;OUR LIVES ARE WOVEN TOGETHER FOR A REASON.

Dilip Tisseverasinghe - A Personal Appreciation

First met Dilip Tisseverasinghe in a summer cricket festival way back in 1997 though his surname was very familiar to me as my mother and aunts used to talk about the Tisseverasinghes'. In fact I very vividly remember Dilip's father from my childhood in Jaffna, impeccably dressed in shirt sleeves and tie, riding his bicycle along Third Cross Street on his way to work in the Commercial Bank. Dilip's mother was a contemporary of my late aunt. I was much junior to Dilip at St Patrick's and did not know him at College. I was also somewhat sceptical about anything to do with my Alma Mater at that stage in my life! Against this background, Dilip introduced himself as the President of the SPC OBA UK and persuaded me to join not only the OBA but the ex-co as well within a few weeks of meeting him at the cricket festival.

As an ex-co member from 1998 to 2003, I was able to observe Dilip in close quarters and to this day his love and commitment to his Alma Mater has been a true inspiration to me. Remembering the times that he chaired the ex-co meetings as President, I can't help but to marvel at Dilip's diplomatic skills in dealing with the differences in opinion between exco members and finding common ground. The meetings always concluded on time and in good spirit. His marketing and people skills helped to drive the membership of the ex-co and also to raise the profile of the OBA UK. He encouraged the young members to bring fresh ideas to the table and personally I feel obtaining the charitable status and setting up the Trust fund are the enduring legacies to his time as the OBA President.



I remember Dilip mentioning once, that he is doing all what he can to his Alma Mater through the SPC OBA UK as that is what his father had commanded him to do before he passed away. Dilip was a tireless campaigner to his cause as demonstrated by him taking up the challenge of charity half marathon to raise funds. Many of us, his friends were concerned about him while he was training for his marathon and felt relieved and elated that he had successfully completed the challenge.

He extended that very same loyalty and commitment to his friends and OBA members as well. He brought many a young reluctant ex-patricians like me into the fold and made them feel like that they all belong to this great patrician family. I have made many friends in the patrician community both young and old because Dilip persevered with a 'sceptic'. He tries to keep in touch with fellow patricians and will try to join the members on family events

and occasions. On a personal note, during my mother's funeral service, due to a mix up, the Church Choir did not turn up and Dilip quickly organised an impromptu choir with the help of Dr Joseph and Dr Rubakumar and Mr Deva Paul. Everyone in the congregation concurred that the 'singing quartet of Patricians' sang so well. That scene will be always etched in my memory.

While appreciating the services rendered by Dilip to the Patrician community in the UK, it is nothing but fair to say a few words about his lovely and able wife Suri. Dilip would not have been able to do all that he did for his Alma Mater if not for her love and support. I am sure all the Patrician community world over will join me in wishing them and family both well.

Tim Emmanuel

For my 6^A Angels...

I think it started to hit me when I got into the van. Poking my head out the window, I stuck my tongue out at the group of grinning twelve-year old boys before me, all there to bid me goodbye on a Saturday morning. S. J. Sanjeevraj, towards the middle of the group, timidly waving, but eyes still bright at the thought of the dollar bill I had just presented to him. "This is for you to spend when you come to the States. Even if it's ten years from now, you make sure you keep it until then," I had told him just a few minutes ago and he had shyly nodded. C. Duman, the shadow of his worn-out navy baseball cap covering his forehead, but his smile visible nonetheless. The night before, with Dumie as our captain, several of my other sixth graders and I had ruthlessly crushed the seventh graders in our spur-of-the-moment soccer match. 3-0 was the final score, I believe. S. Joe Sanjuthan, the chubby but cheery soloist of the sixth grade class. I laughed to myself as I recalled last week when he had volunteered to sing "Billy Boy" in front of the class as a break from fractions. His eyes closed and head swaying, the back row had kept beat for him playing mridangam on their desks. And in the front, of course, grinning and jumping wildly was A. L. Jefferson. Having fondly called him "Nigeria" for the last month, the dark, skinny little fellow had etched a place in my heart, always the last to understand everything and the first to eagerly shout out the (wrong) answer.

My eyes began to brim with tears as we pulled out of the gates of St. Patrick's College, though I tried to conceal it. Though they had called me teacher for a month and a half, I still felt undeserving of their modest gifts and loving goodbyes. Not even the most learned Georgetown professor could have imparted to me in a semester what this group of rambunctious middle schoolers had done in the last month and a half.

Someone once said "He who dares to teach must never cease to learn." And I could not agree more. As I sauntered in on my first day, their unison chant of "Good morning, Miss" upon rising showed me a discipline I had never encountered. Their awe at seeing my electric fan running during the middle of the day made me conscious and ashamed of my air-conditioned standard of living. The lack of television reluctantly brought me to the basketball court, and consequently the soccer and cricket fields, and through their enthusiasm I discovered the simple pleasures of life. Most importantly, astounded by the fact that not one of my students was familiar with Bill Gates and the nonchalant way in which they spoke of bombings, their ignorance taught me of mine. Looking back, it's a bit unclear who the real teacher was during my experience in Jaffna.

However, even though their brilliance in the classroom and their eagerness to learn brought joy to my heart – it would only take me half an hour to breeze through a chapter on decimals – with it came a rueful sadness. The

boys had so much discipline, enthusiasm and potential – yet only a handful had any notion of the Internet. For people unfamiliar with Sri Lanka, it would not seem very surprising that a majority of the youngsters living in the rural north of the country have never touched a computer in their lives, for such is the case in nations throughout the world. One could easily compare the technological unawareness and the abundance of poverty that my children displayed to situations in developing countries in Africa and Asia. However, Sri Lanka can and should not be compared to any of these places.

Sri Lanka is a nation that boasts of a literacy rate of 92%, the highest rate in all of South Asia. Not bad for a tiny island, especially when compared to neighboring India's rate of 52%. Sri Lanka also holds claim to some of the best educational standards in South Asia. Jaffna College, dating back to 1819, has a long history of enrollment from Japanese, Singaporean, Indian and Malaysian students. Though one often hears of gender discrimination laden in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, in the 1960s, Sri Lankan people proudly elected as their leader the world's first female prime minister, an achievement that even the United States has not fulfilled to date. In the 1950s, upon returning from a visit to Colombo, Singapore's founder Lee Kuan Yew pronounced to his people that he hoped one day to make his country as socially, economically and educationally advanced as Sri Lanka. Mr. Lee has since triumphed, with Singapore far surpassing the island in technology and wealth.

To think that countries that once marveled at Sri Lanka's development are now the ones to which Sri Lanka begs for aid is a sad notion indeed. It shows the destructive effects of hate – effects that in two decades can turn a people admired into a people pitied. As Meiko Nishimizu, former Vice President of the South Asia region of the World Bank, once remarked, “[Sri Lanka is now] a nation that looks at her poverty, and says: this surely does not become us. It is a nation that looks at her recent history of social exclusion and violence, and says: this surely does not become us.”

Though devastated by war, Sri Lanka still recently had the best socioeconomic indicators in all of Asia – be it life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, literacy, or near universal primary school enrolment. However, for the past twenty-five years, the north and east have not shared in the country's well being. Looking around Jaffna, it is apparent that the region has come to a developmental standstill.

During the war, communications networks were shut down in rebel regions and travel to the north was virtually suspended, along with electricity and petroleum. Without light, nothing could be accomplished after the sun went down and without gas, bikes became the sole mode of transportation. With no resources and the increasing danger, schools were forced to close their doors and send their students home. The citizens of Jaffna were literally shut out from the rest of the world.

Not only did citizens of the north and east face complete isolation, they bore the burden that a country's civilians should never have to bear the brutality of war. As the LTTE was a guerilla group, the Sri Lankan army had no specific military targets to attack. Consequently, bombings were sporadic and occurred all over the Jaffna peninsula – hitting civilian homes, shops, and schools—and even community gathering places such as the library and town hall. Even St. Patrick's was no exception to the bombings – several shells fell on the school itself, demolishing its water tank and damaging numerous classrooms. Citizens of Jaffna lived in darkness and fear, knowing they were not even safe in their own homes and schools.

Unfortunately, through the devastation, the most affected group in Jaffna has been the children. Though the adults can remember a time of peace and prosperity, the only memories the younger generation of Tamils has are the loss of their friends and family. Thus, a general sense of animosity towards the predominantly Sinhalese government prevails. Although students have sometimes been wronged by the rebels as well as the government, their lack of exposure to the world outside of Jaffna blinds them from seeing both sides of the picture.

However, hateful is the last thing that comes to mind when I think of my students. When I asked them about their dislike towards the government, I could sense that they had been through so much devastation, however I could not see hatred in their hearts. Though they spoke very forcefully against the Sinhalese, I knew that if a Sinhalese student were to enter into their classroom the next day, they would welcome him without any restraint.

Though my boys ended up teaching me more than I could have asked for, I also hope I gave them something different in return. Perspective was perhaps the greatest gift I could provide, by asking them to question why it was they thought the way they did. After encouraging them to write essays for homework about their views of the conflict, most of my boys were quick to inform me that the Sinhalese army had killed many people. However, they seemed shocked that I also urged them to think about the other side, despite being a Tamil myself. They had never before been asked to consider such views.

By stripping them of the opportunities of technological advancement and biasing them through forced isolation, the armed forces on both sides have severely victimized these youngsters. Not only have they hindered them from reaching their full potential, they have neglected to make them aware of what that potential even is. Upon my arrival, any one of my 12-year olds could explain to me the chemical composition of rust, but one of Sanjeevraj's first questions was why everyone in America was white or black.

Fortunately for Sri Lanka, peace is finally progressing and the people of Jaffna are slowly reconnecting with the rest of the world. But what Sanjeevraj, Dumie, Sanjuthan, Jefferson, and the other children of Jaffna need most is for the rest of the world to help them ease this transition. By making them realize that doors are now open for them to explore, and informing them that technology will make it much easier to do so, they will gradually become aware of the fact that the global community is indeed awaiting them.

Children cannot be inspired nor expected to move out of their horizons when they are physically and mentally bound within them. However, if more people from outside Jaffna were willing to invest their time or money in the country as it rebuilds its course, there is no doubt that they will quickly discover and fulfill their immeasurable potentials. Their generation, especially, has no boundaries. And if the world really is as small as we make it out to be, then don't we at least owe it to these kids to prove that to them?

"I can not teach anybody anything. I can only make them think." - Socrates.

Genisha Saverimuthu

