



ELDERS' VOICE

JANUARY 2020

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION

News Bulletin of The Senior Citizens' Forum, Kottayam

Editor: Dhanya Gopinath

The President's Message

P. I. John



There is consensus that we must remove billions of tons of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from the atmosphere to avoid catastrophic climate change. We are starting to see the emergence of an economic system for extracting, storing and making use of carbon.

Carbon dioxide will become a revenue source. Carbon storage in soils is becoming a new income stream for farmers. A new generation of startups is transforming greenhouse gases into fuels, textiles, building materials and other products. This is leading to an economy that removes more carbon dioxide than it emits.

Earth's soils contain more than three times more carbon than is stored in the atmosphere. The microbes and minerals in soil systems serve critical, beneficial roles in soil management. They regulate water, cycle nutrients, filter pollutants, physically support plants and sequester greenhouse gases. A number of soil-enhancing strategies have been sprouting among food companies.

Cement is a versatile, cheap building material, though a massive greenhouse gas emitter. Efforts are on to reduce the carbon footprint of the cement production process. Indian cement companies are innovating in reducing greenhouse gas emissions during the cement production process. Dalmia Cement has committed to setting a science-

based target for GHG emissions reductions. Carbon capture and storage (CCS) as an important technology for creating low-carbon cement.

But what if that carbon could be reused rather than injected underground? That's the proposition of CO2NCRETE, a product developed by UCLA that captures carbon dioxide emissions from industrial activities and use it to produce a cement-like building material. The approach a nearly carbon-neutral construction material. CarbonCure captures carbon dioxide from industrial processes and injects it into concrete during production. This has the dual benefit of strengthening the concrete and trapping carbon dioxide permanently in the finished product.



Part of Indian companies' success stems from better access to waste-based alternative materials, such as fly ash and slag, that come from other carbon-intensive sectors. Fly ash is a by-product of coal combustion and can replace from 15 to 30 percent of the cement in concrete mixes without compromising

strength or durability. Slag, a by-product of the iron-ore processing industry, can be used in similar fashion. Novacem, a British concrete manufacturer, has developed a "carbon negative cement" that absorbs significant quantities of carbon dioxide as it hardens.

An approach to removing carbon from the atmosphere, called direct air capture, or DAC, refers to machines that remove carbon dioxide from the ambient atmosphere. DAC systems use low-carbon energy to remove carbon from the atmosphere with fans and filters. Although the concept is relatively simple, actually removing and purifying a gas that only makes up 0.04 percent of our atmosphere is a challenge. Carbon Engineering, a leading DAC company, published a report suggesting they could remove and store CO₂ for under \$100 per ton.

However, this is a gigantic task. According to the report the United States will need to suck between 185 and 1850 million metric tons of CO₂ per year from the atmosphere with DAC by 2050. For context, this is roughly 4 percent to 37 percent of 2017 U.S. CO₂ emissions. That's no small feat. Even the largest DAC facilities in operation remove only thousands of tons of CO₂ per year, which has to be scaled up a thousand times to make an impact.

For more information about the Forum, visit: <https://www.seniorcitizensktm.net/>

Editor's Musings

Dhanya Gopinath



The year 2020, signifies that we are already in the third decade of the twenty first century.

As seniors, we must wish each other happiness above everything else.

According to Nancy Kupka, an experienced caregiver, who has seen the difference that happiness could make in the lives of seniors, there are many things we could do to improve our sense of well-being.

Her list goes like this: a) Forming meaningful relationships, b) Getting involved in social activities, c) Appreciating the simple pleasures of life, d) Learning not to get stressed over small issues, e) Doing something to help others and f) Finding value in your work.

In simple words, this could mean something as easy as calling a friend you have not talked to for

sometime and making plans to get together. It could also mean getting involved in altruistic activities like a religious group or a volunteer group.

Why even simple pleasures like stopping to smell the flowers and appreciating nature could bring happiness.

Scientific studies have shown that happiness could lead to good health.

This is so as positive emotions make people get a sense of well-being.

On the other hand, negative emotions such as worry, anger and general unhappiness could increase the risk of developing or even worsening heart disease, arthritis and many other chronic health conditions.

We must consider ourselves

lucky to be living in a world where technology

has opened up so many doors for older people. Instead of feeling intimidated by technology let all seniors learn to use the internet. There are many apps designed specifically to help older people stay safe at home and to manage medication.

Very soon buying devices like the Life-saving personal alarm, that allows older people and the disabled to continue living independently in the comfort of their homes will become common place. Already, we can see people moving about in electric wheel chairs that help them feel independent,

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December Meetings

Professor Sivadas was the main speaker at the 1st meeting of the SCF. It was held on the 13th of the month. He had selected the topic, "Eco-spirituality & nature."

This retired professor was the HOD Chemistry at the C. M. S. College, Kottayam. He is not only an educationist, but also an eminent writer and environmentalist. He has received more than twenty awards. Of these, the awards received by him in 1997, 2010, 2014 and 2015 require special mention.

In very simple terms, the learned professor explained why all species of plants and animals are necessary for ecological balance in the universe.

From his early childhood experiences, he believed that children should be made to understand why they should be kind to all living creatures.

The great environmentalist

could not refrain himself from advising the seniors about ecological ethics and some aspects of eco-spirituality.

He concluded his speech by saying that we should learn to think globally and act locally, meaning that we should begin using things made locally.

The second meeting of the Kottayam Senior Citizens' Forum was held on the 27th of December. Christmas was celebrated that day at the Forum.

The Christmas Message was given by Fr. Joshua. While delivering his message the father explained that "Esu", means a saviour and that the words of Christ was relevant even today. Christ believed in happiness for all. He advised all members of the SCF to face 2020 with a new determination.

Two carols were sung by our members. Prof. George Koshy rendered a song in his evergreen

voice. Mr. John Kunnath and Lizzie Kunnath also gave solo performances.

Rev. Koshy Mathews spoke about the need for loving one another. Dr. Mathew Parackal also spoke a few words. Mr. M. Gopinathan spoke about his long association with the activities of Christmas and made a special reference to the Christmas carols that he enjoyed at the Madras Gymkhana Club.

The surprise item was the appearance of Santa Claus. The versatile K. M. Varghese had agreed to play yet another role, much to the delight of the members.

The members departed after enjoying the sumptuous feast which was sponsored by the Governing Board of the SCF.

A blue whale's heart is the size of a Volkswagen (And you could swim through it's arteries)

Snap Decisions

Ann Jacob

It was a Saturday, a holiday for me as well for the children. My daughter Priya had gone to meet a friend, Nirmala, who lived in the neighbourhood. My son Vivek was watching the cricket match which was being telecast on TV.

After an hour or so, my daughter came back very happy and excited and said, "I learnt how to cycle. In the initial stage Nirmala helped me and I could maintain my balance easily."

I was sceptical though, as I knew that it takes time to master cycling. The long and short of the outburst was that she wanted us to buy her a cycle. I told her that Dad would be home soon and that she could settle the matter with him. No sooner had I said this, than I heard the sound of the scooter.

He walked in asking what the hullabaloo was all about. I updated him on the current issue. Thambi, my husband was firm in his decision that he would buy her a cycle only when she was in class VIII. Priya argued that even class V students cycle to school, which was a fact. Madhya Pradesh being a plateau was a paradise for cyclists because of the flat roads without any hilly areas or slopes. Most Malayali parents like us were averse to sending their children to school on cycles despite the fact that hordes of children cycling to and fro, in an orderly manner, was a common sight. The children and I relied on our regular cycle rickshaw puller to transport us to school. As the arguments grew fast and furious I quietly slipped off to the kitchen to prepare tea for the family. In moments like these I make myself scarce.

When I returned with the tea, the scenario had completely changed. Thambi was pacing up and down in the living room while Priya was sulking in her room. I set the tray down the table and announced that tea was ready. Thambi stopped in his tracks and

made a snap decision.

He said, "Everybody get ready. We are going to buy the cycle."

There was a mad scramble. We got ready, gulped down the tea and set off; Thambi and I on the scooter, with the children following us on the rickshaw that we got from the junction.



In the shop, there were numerous cycles. Priya was confused and took her own sweet time to make up her mind. In the

meantime, it was getting dark. Finally, Thambi selected the latest model with many accessories and everybody approved of it. The rickshaw puller transported the cycle by putting it on the roof of his rickshaw and tying it up for safety. By now it was dark and the street lights were switched on. However, Thambi made another Snap Decision. He asked the rickshaw puller to lower the cycle, paid him and said that Priya will cycle upto the house.

I was holding the cycle while Priya was trying to mount it, but in vain. She obviously needed more practice.

Just holding the cycle took me back to my childhood days when I used to cycle through the suburbs of Mumbai (then Bombay). My nostalgic journey down memory lane was cut short abruptly, as my husband made another Snap Decision.

He said that he would take the children home on the scooter and that I should bring the cycle. He added in good measure: "You always claim that you used to cycle in the lanes of Mumbai. Now cycle up to home."

I was still holding the cycle, wondering how to ride a cycle

wearing a saree. But there was no time for procrastination as it was getting darker by the minute because it was the winter season.

I only had two options: one was to wheel the cycle up to the house which was scary at night. The second was to do a Mohanlal, when he flips his mundu and ties it up readying himself to go for the kill while taking on his opponents. I tried to emulate him but quickly gave up.

I then picked up my saree, made it into a bunch and tucked it into my waist praying silently that it would stay. My legs were exposed below the knees but I thought to myself, "modesty to blazes when survival is at stake." The next thing I did was to grab the pallu of my saree and cover my head and face exposing only my eyes. I was scared of anti-social elements prowling around in the dark.

When I neared my house I saw a few women near the provision store awaiting their turn to be served. The store was lit up with bright lights, so I spotted the gossip monger of the colony. Out of the corner of my eye I saw her turning around almost full circle trying to identify the person on the cycle. However I hit the pedal hard and turned into my lane.

(Contd p4)

മാത്തൂർ ഗോവിന്ദൻ കുട്ടിക്ക് കഥകളി പുരസ്കാരം

കലാഭാരതി ഗുരു ചെങ്ങന്നൂർ കഥകളി അക്കാദമി ഏർപ്പെടുത്തിയ ഗുരു ചെങ്ങന്നൂർ കഥകളി പുരസ്കാരത്തിന് (5000) രൂപ കഥകളി ആചാര്യൻ മാത്തൂർ ഗോവിന്ദൻ കുട്ടി അർഹനായി. 27 നു നടക്കുന്ന വാർഷിക സമ്മേളനത്തിൽ പുരസ്കാരം നൽകും



Smt Lally Perumthottam, the ward member of Kochukongamdoor Ayarkunnam panchayat who won the 1st green ward award in the whole of Kottayam District Panchayat was felicitated on 10th Jan 2020. (Photo Minnu John)

(from p3) When I reached the house I saw that the entire family was awaiting my arrival. Seeing my 'get up', my son drily remarked, "Thank God you were not mistaken for a dacoit and taken to the police station." "Very funny," I retorted in my most sarcastic tone.

My husband followed me, mystified, asking questions, "why this odd get-up? Did you fall and hurt yourself? I was about to set out on the scooter to locate you."

I kept mum for a while and responded saying "Try cycling in a six-yard long saree and then you will understand my predicament."

As I entered the bedroom I caught a glimpse of myself in the full-length mirror and burst out laughing.

My anger ' evaporated' when I saw the funny side of it.

From p2

Stair Lifts that enable seniors to get up and down the stairs with ease and Mobility and Scooters that help people who struggle to walk long distances could also be hitting our markets any time.

Remember, technology has not forgotten the needs of the seniors.

Wishing you all Happiness throughout 2020. This alone will help us face the challenges before us in the third decade of the century.

In this issue of the Elders' Voice, we are felicitating two of our talented members.

Kottayam Baburaj received an award on the 11th of January from the Institute For Person Centered Approaches In India (IPCAI).

Mathoor Govindan Kutty will be honoured by the Chenganoor Kathakali Academy with a cash award on the 27th of this month.

Anne Jacob has written one more article with a human interest value.

Our news letter is slowly transforming itself into a family paper. We invite all members to let us know about the happy events in their families.

Pteronophobia is the fear of being tickled by feathers.

WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

May your birthday and every day ahead be filled with the warmth of love, the joy of good health and blessings in abundance!

Prof. K. M. Varghese - 10 Jan

Dr. Radhakrishnan Nair - 10 Jan

Mr. P. I. Mani - 16 Jan

Mr. George Mathew M - 16 Jan

Dr. K. P. George - 21 Jan

Mr. M. Mathew - 26 Jan

Mr. Bhasi Ipe - 31 Jan