



ELDERS' VOICE

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News Bulletin of The Senior Citizens' Forum, Kottayam

Editor: Pushpa Mathew

The President's Message

P. I. John

On 26th June, Mrs. Molly Benjamin, Dr. Benjamin and our treasurer Shyam joined me in participating in the 22nd Annual State Meeting of FOSCAK held in Ettumanoor. FOSCAK is the Federation of Senior Citizens Associations,.

We held our Governing Council meeting on the 29th of June. We discussed how to streamline the induction of new members to the Forum. To make our meetings more participatory by having more members to speak, a panel of three members will be invited to give short speeches of 10 minute duration on a specified topic.

Our plan to hold computer application tutorials for our members is progressing well. Notes and Power Point presentation with Video are ready. We plan to have the first tutorial on 18th June.

It was fascinating to read Ms. Usha Rai's report in the Hindu Business Line on waste management in the Tadipatri municipality in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh (AP); a small civic body with 26000 households and a population of 1.2 lakh. The municipality has received many awards including the Green Leaf Award 2015, the JCB Clean Earth Award 2015 for solid waste management and the Clean India Award 2015 for

environment conservation and preservation.

For door- to- door garbage collection, each household pays Rs. 40 a month, yielding an annual revenue of Rs. 96 lakh. It gets another Rs. 8 lakh for garbage collection from shops. The recycled garbage is sold as compost for Rs. 46 lakh. Water recycled from Nine million litres per day of liquid waste brought by the underground drains is supplied to nearby industries, fetching an additional Rs. 1.36 crore.

I speculated that there would be many other Tadipatris in India and to my pleasant surprise, found many small municipalities doing exceptionally good work in solid waste management.

The October 2006 report by Water and Sanitation Program-South Asia (World Bank) cites Kanchrapara in West Bengal, Panaji in Goa and Suryapet in AP. In Kanchrapara, the idea of a participatory approach to solid waste management emerged in mid-2002 with the main elements as paid door-to-door collection of garbage, use of mobile trailers and segregation at source for effective treatment of waste. Suryapet municipality was the first municipality in India to successfully implement the MSW Rules 2000 on its own, making it a role model in AP. Though this

initiative was spear-headed by the Municipal Commissioner, it received strong backing from the elected councilors.

All these programmes were driven by local drivers. A key decision maker recognized the need to reform the MSW management services, and perceived public discontent with the status quo. They further leveraged their already favorable relationship with political stakeholders in the town for assured political support. They were thus able to effectively translate public discontent into public cooperation for the programme.

When can we expect the Kottayam Municipality to wake up to these best practices practiced elsewhere in solid waste management?



A whip makes a cracking sound because its tip moves so fast it breaks the sound barrier and creates a small sonic boom.

Zidbit: Intenet

Editor's Musings

Pushpa Mathew

Hello everyone,

The past month saw most of us glued to our TV sets watching the World Cup football. Every street corner in Kottayam was adorned with huge cut-outs of Kerala's favourites - Messi, Ronaldo and Neymar. In spite of this football mania, it is very disappointing that India did not play in the World Cup.

In the qualifying round, India was placed in a group against Iran, Guam, Turkmenistan and Oman. And we came last! Why is it that India never plays well enough (except in cricket) to be part of global sporting events like the World Cup and the Olympics? Small countries like Iceland and poor countries like Costa Rica are firmly placed on the world football stage. Iceland with a total population of only 3 lac people, produced a world-class team, egged on by thousands of animated fans roaring together in the unified "Viking Clap"! Costa Rica is a country of just 51,000 sq. kms and faced a liquidity crisis in 2017 due to a growing debt and budget deficit. But its national football team has played in four FIFA World Cup editions. Senegal has a per capita income of just \$1038, but theirs was one of the most impressive teams.

Then why is India lagging? Surely our performance is not due to lack of interest. Nor is it due to lack of infrastructure because many African and Latin American countries are the same but they are able to compete at the World Cup regularly and produce global heroes. In fact, football needs less infrastructure than cricket, which needs all kinds of equipment.

Players from the Indian squad are generally from the North East, Bengal, Goa or Kerala but none from the Hindi heartland.

Basically, in football, the full team is involved in the game, unlike in cricket, where each player is independent. We excel in individual sports like shooting, weight-lifting, boxing and badminton. Is it because we cannot play together as a team? Or is it because our players lack the stamina for sustained vigorous play for 90 minutes? Or maybe because of political interference. The President of the Croatian Football Federation is Davor Suker (Golden Boot at the 1998 World Cup), while the President of the All India Football Federation is Praful Patel of the NCP!

A recent Thomson Reuters survey ranked India as the most dangerous country for women. It was rated as dangerous from the perspectives of all factors that the survey took into account - health-care, discrimination, cultural traditions, sexual violence and human trafficking. The Govt. was quick to slam the survey saying that it was based on the perceptions of a limited number of experts polled and it does not make for representative data. But recently an 8-year old was raped inside a temple and killed and several political personalities attended a rally in support of the accused. A group of young women activists, performing a street-play in Jharkhand to protest against trafficking of women were themselves abducted by armed men and gang-raped! And a few weeks back, the external affairs minister, Sushma Swaraj was attacked by on-line trolls when she took

up the case of an inter-faith married

couple and neither the PM nor any of her cabinet colleagues stood up in her defence for considerable time. When the Home Minister finally did, it was a case of too little, too late. It only goes to prove that whether you are a defence-less little girl from a minority community or a lady Cabinet Minister, India is a dangerous country for all women!

That certainly calls for introspection. Our patriarchal sexist structures need to be challenged. Women are used to objectionable stares and uncalled for whistles and comments in our day-to-day life and are afraid to use public transport after sunset. Having said that, I must also add that there have been numerous instances where strangers (men) helped me carry my heavy luggage at railway stations and airports and my colleagues (again men) at work were kind enough to share my work-load because I had to rush home for a sick child. So I don't call every man dangerous. But when 50% of a country's population is in a constant state of vigilance, no democracy can be a real democracy.

Until next time, then.

"Do not dwell in the past, do not dream of the future, concentrate the mind on the present moment"
Buddha



George Isaac at 90

Prof Babu Joseph

The nonagenarian George Isaac was born into the illustrious family of Palathinkal on 15/4/1928 as the second of the four children of Mr P.V. Isaac and Mrs Susy Isaac. P.V. Isaac was a well-known entomologist and later on Secretary Rubber Board and Susy Isaac was the founder of the famous Palat brand of food products. Late Dr. P.V. Cherian, his uncle was a well-known physicist, who was also Governor of Maharashtra. His sister, Mrs. Mary Roy is the founder of the famous Corpus Christi School, Kottayam and her daughter Arundhati Roy is the author of the Booker Prize winning novel, 'The God of Small Things'.

George Isaac had a brilliant academic career, having been educated at E. John Memorial School Ayemanam, St. Columbus School, Delhi, St. Stephen's College, Delhi and Madras Christian College (MCC) Tambaram. On completion of his studies at MCC, he received the 'Rhodes Scholarship', which enabled him to further pursue his studies in Balliol College in University of Oxford. The Rhodes scholarship is given only to a select few, whose academic brilliance and personality traits qualify them to be world class leaders. Economics, Philosophy and Politics were his majors at Oxford.

George Isaac's contemporaries in Oxford include people of eminence like Daniel Patrick Moynihan who later became US Ambassador to India and Sri. Ravi Mathai, the founder of IIM

Ahmedabad. The former Union President Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, Z A Bhutto, President of Pakistan, Bill Clinton former President of USA were among some of the brilliant minds, who had received Rhodes Scholarship in the past. The times which Sri. George Isaac spent in Oxford were quite memorable and enriched his whole lifetime.



After his Oxford days he came back to India and joined as an executive in Metal Box, Chennai. But after a couple of years there, his inner call to serve his native state of Kerala compelled him to resign from his job and take over the management of Malabar Coast Products. Although the Palat brand was already a household name for its quality in Kottayam and surrounding areas, it was George Isaac's incessant efforts, which made it known in all countries, wherever there was a Malayalee presence.

But George Isaac's interests were never confined to his business alone. He toiled day in and day out to make Kerala an investment friendly state. As the President of the Kerala State Small Industries Association, he

was instrumental in persuading T.V. Thomas, the then Industries Minister to start one mini industrial estate in each Panchayat in Kerala. The strategy was to have 1000 such mini industrial estates in the State of Kerala, leading to the industrialization of the state by making use of the locally available resources.

He fought many a case in the law courts single handedly for the cause of the small entrepreneur. George was a great votary of human rights and fundamental human freedoms, enshrined in the constitution of India. He was a liberal democrat par excellence, and later on, attracted by the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi he started the Kottayam Chapter of the Gandhi Peace Foundation and continued to be its president championing the cause of peace, justice and communal harmony.

There may be people who think that Mr. George Isaac's life was one of lost opportunities considering his brilliant academic career and contacts all over the world. But for him, his life was one of great fulfilment since he worked all along for causes dear to his heart, unmindful of what was happening to him. For him, what was happening through him was much more important.

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June Meetings

For the benefit of members, who missed last month's meetings due to various reasons, we give a gist of the talks given last month.

At the meeting on the 8th of June 2018, Dr. Pratheesh Mammen, Project Scientist, "Institute of Climate of Climate Change Studies" Kottayam spoke on the subject, "Ecological Risks & Concerns in a Plastic World."

Although plastics have contributed tremendously to our conveniences, they have also become a menace to society.

Burning or burying them is no solution. Dr. Pratheesh Mammen said, he would rather speak of Reduce & Re-use of Plastics.



Mr. Manoharan speaking on the Panchayati Raj

The 11th meeting of the Senior Citizens' Forum was held on the 22nd of June 2018. Our

member Mr.M.Manoharan, covered the topic, "Twenty five years of Panchayat Raj"

He explained the Thrithala or Three-tiered Panchayat system; with the Grama Panchayat at the basic level, the Block or the Taluk Panchayat in the middle tier and the Jilla Parishad at the topmost tier.

The panchayat system has brought democracy to the grassroots. There is a 50% reservation for women, the S.T. & S.C. The Kudumbasree & the Akshaya centres are offshoots of the Panchayat system.

Dhanya Gopinath

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Soosy Isaac, his wife and business partner has been the rock, standing behind him, supporting him with honesty and loyalty. She attends to his every need and is his soulmate, understanding all his desires, even when they are not verbally expressed.

Dear George Isaac: People like you are only few and far between, but the services you have rendered to society will be remembered for long and hats off to you. We, the members of the Senior Citizens Forum Kottayam pay our respectful tributes to you on your celebrating Navathi. May you live longer and continue serving the society in whatever capacity you wish. But we know one thing for sure, you are one of the last of the Romans.

Blockchain Technology

A blockchain is a distributed database of records of all transactions that have been executed and shared among participating parties. Each transaction is verified and authenticated by a majority of the participants in the system. Once entered, each transaction is encrypted and is unalterable. Transactions are validated by a network of users called "miners".

Blockchain technology is finding application in wide range of areas: Banks can use blockchain to make secure, low-cost, faster transactions. Beyond financial transactions, the technology can be used to put proof of existence of all legal documents, health records, royalty payments, notary, and private securities.

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(This was most unexpected!) Immediately, the class monitor, raised her hand and explained in her pidgin English how it worked. He seemed quite satisfied.

By now the Principal's frown had disappeared and the Inspector was smiling indulgently at the students. I think he liked their "joie de vivre" and candid replies. As they were leaving the class the students stood and vociferously shouted, "Thank you Sir, Thank you ma'am".

I heaved a sigh of relief as the children saved the day.....and me.

Stray Thoughts

Ann Jacob



During my first year of teaching I had an experience which was totally new to me and that was Inspection. I had so far viewed it as a student from the other side, and now I had to face it as a teacher, which was a different ball game altogether. As students, we would be informed by our teachers that on a particular day there would be inspection and so all the students should come to school wearing neat and clean uniforms with notebooks and text - books neatly covered, in case the Inspector randomly asked a student for one. We were strictly reminded to maintain discipline; otherwise it would mar the reputation of the school. Being young and gullible we waited for the "Monster" with bated breath. But as we grew older and reached the higher classes, we understood it was not entirely as the teachers projected it. On seeing the discomfiture and nervousness of an otherwise confident teacher, we realized that the onus of impressing the Inspector was on the teacher and they were graded according to various parameters like teaching ability, class control, black board summary etc.

I shall share with you one of my experiences of Inspection in a school, where I taught. I was a novice without any teaching experience; just out of college. Mid-year, the principal called for a staff meeting and informed us that Inspection was scheduled for a particular day and we should all gear up for it. We were instructed to display charts as well as a creative stuff on the class notice board. Besides this each class had to prepare a project on the topic being taught. She emphasized the point that it should be done by the students,

under the supervision of the teacher. No professional help should be sought.

When the meeting was over I went back to the class. I didn't want to frighten them about the 'monster' who would come to test them. They were 8 year olds bursting with energy and exuberance. I simply said that an uncle or aunt would be coming to our school and would visit each class so we should prepare for their arrival.

The charts were easy to make. Just a matter of cut and paste with the person having the best handwriting doing the writing. For the project, I selected the science topic 'Water'. I decided to make a model of how water reaches the households from the lakes (In Mumbai it is Powai Lake & Vihar Lake). I was wondering how I would manage; but their enthusiasm was infectious and so during the lunch-break and free periods we would work at it & finally we completed it. The model showed the lake with the reservoirs situated at the top of the hill. The water was pumped from the lakes through huge pipes to the reservoirs and later sent to the houses and establishments below through a network of smaller pipes.

It was not as easy as I had envisioned. The plastiscene and glue would hold together for a while and then fall apart. Finally we managed through trial & error. (Day by day my admiration for Engineers was increasing!) Cardboard cut-outs of houses, ice cream sticks for the fence and strips of green paper for grass were entrusted to small groups. The finished product left much room for improvement. I consoled myself that I followed the Principal's instructions to the

T, as one look at this staggering contraption and there could not be an iota of doubt that it was prepared by the children.

On the day of the inspection my heart sank when I saw the beautiful models brought to the school in cars. For a moment I was tempted to do a U-Turn and go home. But good sense prevailed and I proceeded to the class. I took out the model from the class cupboard and placed it on the teacher's table. After a while, the Principal and the Inspector entered the class. The children wished him in a loud voice and their smiling eager faces brought a smile to the Inspector's face. He was in fact a portly middle aged man with a pleasant demeanor. But the Principal was looking at the model with a frown on her face. I don't blame her because the model looked as if it would give way any moment.

Pointing to the model the Inspector asked "Who made it?" The whole class answered together "We made it" and added..."Teacher helped us".

At random he asked a few students which portion they made. At this point there was bedlam as each student was vying with the other to impress the Inspector. No amount of rolling of my eyes surreptitiously could restrain them. Then he asked "Who can explain how this works?"

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Governing Board Meeting



The Governing Board met on 29th of June in this beautiful bistro on the K K Road. The GB discussed streamlining the induction of new members to the Forum, making our meetings more participatory by having more members to speak and other matters.

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!

Mrs. Molly Abraham 1 July
Dr. Elizabeth Philip 2 July
Mrs. Pushpa Mathew 4 July
Dr. George Jacob 7 July
Dr. Mrs Rachel Kurien 13 July
Dr. C Radhakrishnan 16 July
Mr. Cherian K Joseph 19 July
Mrs. Minnu John 20 July
Mrs. Valsa Koshy 23 July
Dr. E C Raju 26 July
Mr. V K G Nair 28 July
Dr. Joy J Peediakal 28 July
Mrs. Mariamma Poullose 29 July

Welcome to New Members!

Mr. S. K. Paulose is a mechanical engineer who passed out from the National Institute of Technology, Rourkela. He worked in a steel plant in Odisha for 28 yrs, and retired as the executive director of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd.



His wife Mrs. Mariamma Paulose was the Principal of Jyoti Bala Vihar School and Arunodaya Special school for retarded children, both run by the steel plant in its vast campus.

They have a son and a daughter. The daughter has specialised in human genetics and bioinformatics and is now in Abu Dhabi with her family. Their son is a mechanical engineer with an MBA from Germany and is now working there.

Mr and Mrs Paulose live in Keezhkuknnu near Kanjikuzhy.

Computer Tutorials Begin!

Tutorials with the intent of updating the computer and Internet skills of the the Forum members began on the 18th July 2018. The full course is expected to cover Hardware, Operating systems, Windows 7 basics, Computer networks and Internet, Backing up data, Email, Cloud storage, Net shopping and Net banking etc.



Additional batches are planned to accommodate those who, for various reasons could not be part of the the first batch.

The objective is to enable our members to exploit the full potential and benefits of the Internet Technology.