



# ELDERS' VOICE

JUNE 2022

FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION ONLY

News Bulletin of The Senior Citizens' Forum, Kottayam

Editor: Pushpa Mathew

## The President's Message

**Dr. Joseph Cherian**

After a gap of two years, we are re-viving the Elders' Voice, the Senior Citizens' Forum newsletter. A new editor, Smt Pushpa Ann Mathew has taken charge and let us hope that the publication would continue without further breaks.

World Environment Day is being celebrated this year on 5th June when the Earth is facing the emergency of the climate warming up too quickly for people and nature to adapt. The threat of extinction of a million species by habitat loss and other pressures and the continuous threat of the poisoning of the environment due to pollution are other concerns. The year 2022 is the 50th year after establishing the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and is hence historical. The high-level Stockholm+50 international meeting will also happen at that time. These iconic events provide an opportunity to strengthen cooperation within the international community and lead the transformation toward a more sustainable society.

World Environment Day is celebrated annually by the UNEP. It is the largest global platform for public outreach on environmental matters where millions of people across the globe converge in celebration. We may recall that India was the host of the 45th WED. The theme selected was 'Beat Plastic Pollution. WED celebration in 2021 initiated the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, spanning a decade until 2030. The objective is to reclaim billions of hectares of greens.

'OnlyOneEarth' is the theme for WED 2022. It calls for collaborative global action for change to cherish, protect and restore our planet. UNEP has published a prescriptive guide summarising the collective, change-inducing actions that people, organisations and governments can adopt to protect and restore our planet.

We are profligate in our actions to maintain our way of life: we use the equivalent of 1.6 Earths to do this. The tragedy is that this is unsustainable for the ecosystems to handle. Our lifestyles generate 60 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions.

Sustainable lifestyles could reduce our emissions by 40 to 70% by 2050.

Sustainable actions can drive economic development while mitigating climate change. This can improve health and reduce pollution and most importantly, alleviate poverty. It is reported that the potential income increase can be as high as 11% in low and middle-income countries by 2060.

The way out of this conundrum is to move our economies and societies towards inclusiveness and embracing nature. We must heal rather than harm the planet. The technological prescriptions offering sustainability need to be financially viable and attractive for people to opt for them. Critical areas for change include building our homes and lifestyles, our cities, where we work and worship, our investment decisions and entertainment options, how we produce energy, and our manufacturing methods and transportation systems.



Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom. Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.

Lao Tsu

<https://www.seniorcitizensktm.net/>

<https://www.scfktm.com/>

# Editor's Musings

## Pushpa Mathew



Hello Everyone,

After the Covid shut us all indoors for over 2 years, we're finally meeting physically since 22nd April 2022 at our usual meeting place at the SEERI Auditorium. Several of our members passed on during this period and our heartfelt condolences to the grieving family members.

At this time, our President, Dr P I John provided excellent leadership. He painstakingly organized Zoom meetings on alternate Fridays, sometimes inviting guest speakers and sometimes simply providing a platform for the members to chat and interact with each other when Covid prevented us from going out and meeting anyone outside our homes. Some of our members, who are not very tech-savvy, could not participate but those of us, who did, eagerly looked forward to these Zoom meetings, where we shared news and views on topical issues. Our sincere thanks to Dr John, who definitely brought a spark into our lives on those alternate Fridays, which we looked forward to with great anticipation. We want to express our deep

gratitude for the dedicated work, you did for us Dr. John for the past 2 years.

On 24th May an 18-year old gunman, with a legally bought assault rifle strode into an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas and shot dead 19 children, under the age of 10 and 2 teachers, after first shooting his grandmother at home. It was another one in the long list of mass shootings, that happen regularly in US. While President Biden upbraided the gun lobby, former President, Donald Trump rejected calls for tighter gun control saying that "the existence of evil in our world is not a reason to disarm law-abiding citizens." In fact, the Second Amendment of the Constitution of the United States was created because the Founding Fathers felt that citizens should be able to protect themselves against any threat to their well-being or personal freedom. But when the Second Amendment was ratified in 1791, there were no high caliber automatic weapons, like the one used in this shooting and this has sparked a national debate over

gun control. More than 17,000 people have died in gun related incidents across US in the past year alone, according to the Indo-Asian News Service (IANS)

In Australia, the Port Arthur massacre of 1996, when a young man killed 35 people with a semi-automatic rifle, led the Conservative-led government to push through fundamental changes in the country's gun laws, in cooperation with the various states and territories, which regulate firearms. A temporary buy-back program took some 650,000 assault weapons out of public circulation. Australia's hand gun laws too were tightened. Many analysts say that these measures were highly effective, citing declines in gun death rates and gun-related mass killings in Australia. Let's hope better sense prevails in the US as well.

Until next time then.

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## Installation of New Office-Bearers of the Kottayam Senior Citizens' Forum

The Installation of New Office Bearers of the SCF was held at the SEERI auditorium.

It was held at the 745th meeting of the SCF on Friday the 13th of May 2022.

In his Farewell address, the President Dr P I John spoke about the zoom meetings held during the pandemic. These meetings were held to keep the Fellowship

of the SCF alive.

On an average 10-15 members used to participate at such meetings.

Dr John thanked all members for their co-operation during his tenure of 4 years as President.

He requested all members & committee members to see if they could bring in 1 or 2 eligible people to the Forum and see if they could be persuaded to join the Forum. The membership of the Forum was coming down because of the demise of some of the former members.

Prof K M Varghese was invited to

take his place as the Master of Ceremonies for the Swearing-in-Ceremony of the Office Bearers for the year 2022-2023.

The New Office Bearers were sworn in:-

President Dr Joseph Cherian

Vice-President Mrs Dhanya Gopinath

Secretary Mr Simon Paulose

Jt. Secretary Dr. John B Kunnath

Treasurer Mr V G Shyam

(Contd next page)

Governing Board Members:

Dr P I John

Mr M Gopalakrishnan Nair

Prof Babu Joseph

Mrs Rani Mathew

Kottayam Baburaj

Dr Siva Shankara Pillay

Editorial Section:

Mrs Pushpa Annie Mathew Editor,  
Elders' Voice

Mrs Lizzie Kunnath Associate  
Editor

Special Invitees

1)Dr Mathew Parackal

2)Mr A M Mathew

3)Mr M Gopinathan

4)Mr M Manoharan

5)Prof K M Varghese

6)Mr P I Mani

7)Mrs Omana Abraham

8) Mr P P Abraham

In his acceptance speech , the incoming President Dr Joseph Cherian promised to uphold the standards of the Kottayam Senior Citizens' Forum.

Dr Cherian congratulated the Past President Dr P I John for the excellent work done by him during the last 4 years.

Prof K M Varghese also spoke.He said that Dr P I John's expertise in IT had helped the SCF hold Virtual meetings during the pandemic.

Dr Mathew Parackal spoke about presentations made by Dr John. He could come to the level of the layman & educate them about the latest developments in Science & Technology.

The past Secretary Mr M Gopalakrishnan delivered the Vote of Thanks.

The High Tea was sponsored by the incoming President.



Dr Joseph Cherian being sworn in by Prof K M Varghese as the new President



Smt Dhanya Gopinath being sworn in as the Vice-President



Shri Simon Paul being sworn in as the Secretary



Shri V G Shyam being sworn in as the Treasurer

# King Island

Have you heard of King Island? Well, I hadn't – until my children in Melbourne suggested that we go there on a week's holiday. Guarding the stormy western entrance to the Bass Strait, about 150 kms south of the mainland of Australia is this rugged, lonely island, cut off from the rest of the world by jagged reefs, raging seas and icy howling Roaring Forties winds in the Antarctic sea. The island is just 64 kms long and 26 kms at its widest.

The mineral rich soil, cool temperatures and abundant rainfall results in lush, green



pastures. And everywhere you see grazing cattle. Which leads to the island's famous beef and cheeses.

Most of the island's population is engaged in the production of these two items. We also came across some micro-breweries and boutique wineries. Since it rains 280 days in a year, the island's primary export is "King Island Cloud Juice", which is bottled rain water!

The island is also a golfer's paradise with numerous golf courses and golfers, from all over, visit the island to play their favourite game. The only way to reach the island is by small private chartered aircrafts. We took an 8-seater aircraft for ourselves, with our grandson occupying the co-pilot's seat! It was dark and



rainy on our outward journey and we couldn't see anything on the way, until we landed there. But the



weather Gods were favourable on our return journey and we could see stormy seas, foaming waves and beautiful sunset as we flew over them. In fact, the island has a fascinating history of ship wrecks and we saw several remains of shipwrecks during our stay there. We could stand near cliff edges and watch the crashing blue sea waves. It was a memorable sight. We also enjoyed the local king island beef and salmon steak meals and local wine in some of the boutique restaurants overlooking azure sea.

Another interesting feature we came across was a "boat-house". A boat-house is a large room on the edge of a cliff or a pier, overlooking the crashing waves. The room is fully furnished with a dining table, chairs, some sofas to lounge in, a microwave, fridge, crockery and cutlery etc. All you have to do is to pack a picnic

## 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 Laly Mathew -1 June

Mr Joseph Mannooparambil – 3 June

Mr P K Kurian - 3 June

Mr M M Thomas -5 June

Mr Sony Mathew - 21 June

Prof Daisy Cherian - 29th June

Dr Markose Arackal - 30th June