



ELDERS' VOICE

October 2026

Editor: Dr P I John

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President's Message



Warm greetings to you all.

As I reflect on life's beautiful journey, I am reminded of the precious memories, meaningful relationships and valuable lessons that shape each of our lives.

I believe our golden years can be among the most fulfilling phases of life. Retirement offers opportunities to explore new interests, reconnect with friends,

learn new skills and share the wisdom we have gained through experience. We continue to have so much to contribute to our families and society.

As the world changes rapidly with technology and artificial intelligence, let us approach these developments with curiosity and an open mind. Embracing new skills can strengthen our confidence, independence and sense of achievement.

While the world evolves, the importance of human connection remains timeless. A thoughtful phone call, a shared laugh or a simple act of kindness can make a meaningful difference in someone's life.

This is what makes our Senior Citizens Forum so special. It offers a welcoming space to participate in activities, celebrate occasions, learn from one

another and extend support whenever needed. As President, I feel privileged to be part of this wonderful Forum. Your enthusiasm and participation give it its true spirit.

Let us continue to nurture an atmosphere of care, inclusion and mutual respect. May we remain curious, take care of our health, pursue our interests and find happiness in the simple pleasures of everyday life.

Together, let us create beautiful memories and make our Forum a place filled with warmth, laughter, encouragement and meaningful experiences.

With warm regards and heartfelt wishes to each of you,

Kochurani Mathew

President

Digital Skills for Senior Citizens

In an increasingly interconnected world, digital skills have transformed from a luxury into a fundamental necessity for senior citizens. As public utilities, healthcare services, and personal banking transition to online platforms, technical proficiency serves as a critical bridge to autonomy, inclusion, and well-being.

First, digital literacy directly

combats social isolation—a widespread challenge among older adults. Mastering video calling applications, messaging tools, and email enables seniors to maintain vibrant relationships with family and friends regardless of geographical distance. Staying engaged through online communities and digital media fosters a sense of belonging and helps keep cognitive functions sharp.

Second, access to digital tools enhances personal indepe

ndence and health management. Through telemedicine, older adults can consult specialists, access lab results, and order prescriptions directly from home—reducing the burden of physical travel. Similarly, internet banking, utility payments, and quick-commerce services empower seniors to manage financial and domestic responsibilities self-sufficiently, preserving their dignity and control over daily routines.

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SPSS and NBS



As a student at the CMS High School, my Maharajah's Scholarship of five rupees a month was my key to independence. My father allowed me to spend it in any way I liked. I chose to spend it at the National Book Stall in Kottayam, immersing myself in Modern Malayalam literature.

The Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham (SPSS) and the National Book Stall (NBS) have played a monumental role in the cultural history of Kerala, particularly in establishing

Kottayam as a literary hub.

Sahitya Pravarthaka Sahakarana Sangham (SPSS) was established in 1945 in Kottayam. It is a unique cooperative society created by writers, for writers. Its primary mission was to ensure that authors received fair royalties and maintained ownership over the production of their books. At the time of its inception, it was one of the first successful experiments in the world where writers collectively ran a publishing house on a cooperative basis.

SPSS gave Malayalam literature a new direction, liberating authors from the exploitation by unorganized private publishers and ensuring high-quality book production.

National Book Stall (NBS) began as a private bookstore but was eventually merged with SPSS in 1945 to serve as its commercial wing. NBS acts as the marketing

and distribution heart of SPSS. While headquartered in Kottayam, it established a vast network of branches across Kerala, making literature accessible even in rural areas.

Through initiatives like the 'Pustaka Mela' (Book Fairs), NBS revolutionized the reading culture in Kerala, bringing books directly to the common man.

Kottayam is often called "Akshara Nagari" (the City of Letters), and a significant portion of that reputation is due to the work of SPSS and NBS. These institutions turned the city into the nerve center of Malayalam publishing. Their efforts did more than just support writers; they were instrumental in driving Kerala's high literacy rates and fostering a deep-rooted culture of reading and intellectual discourse.

P I John



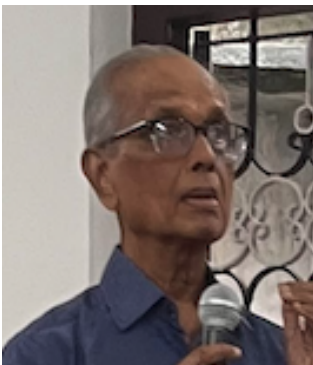
Events of 11th September

1. Dr Annie Mathew after offering the Presidential Collar 2. Prof P C Varghese offering the prayer 3. Smt Pushpa Mathew introducing the Chief guest

Next page: 1. Dr Rachel Oommen being felicitated after her talk 2. Smt Dhanya Gopinath delivering the vote of thanks 3 & 4: The audience on 11 Sept meeting



COCKROACHES & DEMOCRACY



We have always seen cockroaches as a nuisance. They are omnipresent and difficult

to eradicate. They are resilient and it is said that they can survive atomic energy, the Arctic cold and the scorching heat of the arid desert.

Recently, some events, have made us realise that some cockroaches are not all that bad. These are the Z generation among us (those between 15 &

29 yrs of age). They have proved that they are not afraid of anything, they are resilient and ready to fight for their rights. These young students are looking for a break in life, have an honest Examination System and finally a Steady Job. These are expectations that no one can find fault with. However some events made them lose faith for a better tomorrow. The NEET fiasco was one of them. They finally decided to protest to the powers that be and demand accountability. These cockroaches came in swarms and occupied Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

No amount of police action could break their resolve. In typical Gandhian style, they stood their ground & demanded action from the authorities. Their leaders

repeatedly called on their comrades to avoid any violence on their part. How Gandhiji would have loved their belief in the Power of Non- violence!

This defiance in the face of much physical pain, showed their resolve to return to Jantar Mantar, even after the beating they took from the police, the previous day. They were prepared to act regardless of consequences, as they felt that their education and future are being undermined.

What the elites are afraid to express, these cockroaches defiantly brought into the open. They did succeed in bringing into the open some of the dark shadows in our society, which called for immediate action.

(Contd on p4)

Why I cherish the SCF Fellowship



My answer is in the topic itself. Where else will I get a chance to

participate in a competition at this age? It inspires my thinking memory and helps to develop a positive attitude to life itself.

Raju and I joined SCF recently - better late than never. Raju was extremely busy with work throughout his career and so had no time for other activities. He enjoyed his work thoroughly and so I kept myself busy to attend retreats, prayer meetings, and Bible study.

Then comes the retirement and Raju was not ready for that! Moreover he had quite a few health issues also. When you are active young and working, there

will be lots of people to interact with. But once you retire, there will be none but our life has to go on. So I prayed to God for guidance and realized that we should meet people of the same wavelength and spend quality time with them. Then like Godsent angels, Raju and Pushpa (Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mathew) suggested SCF and I immediately wanted to join. Then I had to convince my husband. So I asked our doctor about it in Raju's presence and the doctor immediately said that will be very good for him.

We attended Onam celebrations of SCF as Raju and Pushpa's guests and by God's grace my husband agreed to join. Then there is no looking back. We met a whole lot of cheerful and enthusiastic ladies and gentlemen. Every fortnight there is a meeting where guest speakers share valuable information. Also, the juniors among the seniors will entertain us with songs, dance, etc. Prem Prakash's 'Alliyambel' took us all back to our younger days.

We are forever grateful to Raju and Pushpa, Susheela and Rajan, John Sir and Minnu, Rani and Mathew Sir, PC Varghese and Leelamma for visiting us and spending quality time with us. Varghese Sir prayed with us and it meant a lot to us.

After Raju left me I was wondering whether I should continue or not. I prayed about it and then came to me the Godsent angel-Salima, our young secretary, who very firmly said that I must continue as there are others like me in the group. The label of widow is heartbreaking at times, but then I thought about the less fortunate young widows. My children also told me to continue all the activities as I have to be engaged till my call comes. SCF surely plays a good role as I can meet a friendly group every fortnight. All are retired people who held high positions in society in their respective fields. So there is no competition, only contentment and happiness.

Jaya George

(Contd from p3)

Dissent, Debate and Compromise, is the Hallmark of Democracy. In a large diverse country like ours, it is easy for the government to lose touch with realities on the ground. It is our duty to remind them of their promises and demand action.

What happened at Jantar Mantar was a Wake-Up Call. The govt. did well to realise it, though a little too late and promise action. Here there are no Winners or Losers. Democracy is the winner and for that we have to thank the Cockroaches.

M Gopinathan

(Contd from p1)

Finally, digital awareness provides vital security in a tech-driven landscape. Learning basic cybersecurity practices equips seniors to recognize online scams, phishing attempts, and fraudulent schemes, safeguarding their resources and privacy. Equipping senior citizens with digital confidence does not merely streamline logistical tasks; it ensures they remain active, informed, and empowered participants in modern society.

Events in October

Gandhi Jayanti (October 2)
Indian Air Force Day (October 8)
World Mental Health Day (October 10)
Navarathri Festival (October 11 – 21)
World Food Day (October 16)
Dussehra / Vijayadashami (October 20)
United Nations Day (October 24)
National Unity Day (October 31)



Meeting of 25th September

1. Marykuty Varghese adorning the President with the collar
2. Shri V G Shyam's prayer song
3. A Guest from Canada; Prof K M Varghese's sister
4. Dr Markose Arackal talks about "Survival of the sickest"
5. Smt Lizzy Kunnath rendering a song
6. The birthday boys and gals
7. A potted plant for Dr Mathew Parackal
8. Smt Maya Cherian delivering the vote of thanks

October Birthday Greetings!

1. K I Philip - 2/10
2. Dhanya - 13/10
3. M J George - 17/10

4. Annamma Mathai- 19/10

5. P K Philipose - 21/10

6. T U Mathai - 23/10

7. Elizabeth Issac - 24/10

8. Laila Joseph - 26/10

October Wedding Anniversaries

1. Babu Joseph & Laila - 19/10/75

2. K I Philip & Elizabeth -
25/10/71



Scenes from the 25th September meeting: 1. Prof P VC Varghese's comments 2. Prof Babu Joseph speaking
3. The President and the Secretary in consultation

SECRETARY'S CORNER



The talk of September 11 th meeting was on a subject useful to senior citizens:

"Rheumatology and how senior

citizens can manage the related issues effectively". There was good participation from the audience too.

On 25 th Sept, the talk was again by another Doctor from our group on "Survival of the Sickest": How our body itself takes care of some the internal health issues . Very interesting and full of new information .

We also celebrated birthdays and anniversaries of our members that came in August and September.

All together we had very interesting and useful meetings during this month .

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