

SLCAO UP-COMING EVENTS

- Sinhala-Tamil New Year, 26 April 2014

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Floral Tributes	2
Study Shows...	2
Kindness week	3
Balangoda Man	3
More photos	4
A Breaking news...	4
Pencil Sketch	4



HOSPITAL BEDS FOR SRI LANKA PROJECT

A great project carried out by **SLCAO** with the assistance of the Sri Lankan community, its friends and the **Sri Lankan High Commission in Ottawa!**

The objective was to raise the funds required to ship 200 electric hospital beds donated by a leading long term care giving organization in Ottawa. These beds which are in excellent shape would cost in the range CA\$ 1000 each, if bought new. The challenge was to raise the required funds (US\$ 8,000) within 10 days.



With the enormous compassion and generosity of the community and friends, over \$6000 were collected within the stipulated period, which was amazing!

As the total required to rent two containers could not be raised by the deadline, SLCAO decided to go with just one container which originally thought would carry only 80-90 beds. SLCAO also requested

volunteers to help the loading of beds to the container. If contracted this task to the shipping vendor, it may have cost another \$1000 or so.

In spite of the freezing cold and snow, a reasonable number of volunteers came to help with the loading. SLCAO members, friends of the community and Sri Lanka High Commission staff were among these volunteers.



The beds were heavy and scattered all over the 4-storied building. Bringing them to the loading bay and the loading were difficult tasks. The work which started at 10 A.M. got finished with the last bed loaded in around 8:30 PM. The final count was an **unbelievable 140 beds!**

Well-deserved applause for everyone contributed monetarily and physically to this project!

We are not yet out of the woods with this project. The second phase is to monitor

the deployment of these beds once they reach Sri Lanka. The Deputy High Commissioner Mr. Lionel Premasiri and the Ministry of Special Projects in Sri

Lanka will take leadership in coordinating the efforts in Sri Lanka and we hope that these beds will be distributed to the needy hospitals there.

It is also important to keep in mind that these beds require voltage converters to match the different voltage (220V) in Sri Lanka and new mattresses in order to be fully operational. It would be another challenge for SLCAO to see that these goals are met.

Check for more details on this project at: <http://tinyurl.com/kuhsgn6>



Floral Tributes
& Photographs by Kumudini Nicholas



To late Diana, Princess of Wales: unfamiliar flower, Kensington Palace garden, London, England (2008)



To Anoma Gamage: Tropical Beauty, her home garden Udahamulla, Sri Lanka (2010)



To those who perished defending their religious affiliations: Roses, Mormons First Church, Arizona (not Utah), USA (2012)



To Subhashini Ranasinghe: Kandyan Dancer Orchid; Her home garden Pannipitiya, Sri Lanka (2011)

Study shows Canada’s South Asian population at higher risk of cardio vascular disease and Vitamin-D deficiency
By Mohan Samarasinghe

South Asian Canadians are prone to cardio vascular disease and Vitamin-D deficiency, which is a precursor to bone degenerative diseases, more so than their Caucasian counterparts, a recent study by Health Canada has found.

“This study has confirmed the information that was out there in the scientific community for some time. That health-wise, we’re poor performers when compared to Caucasians. Sadly, our profile is not a healthy profile,” says Dr. Nimal Ratnayake, a senior research scientist at Health Canada.

The just-concluded study has found that South Asians have a poorer blood lipid profile compared to Caucasians and showed them to be burdened with lower levels of HDL cholesterol (the good kind), higher levels of triglycerides and higher levels of glucose. Furthermore, it showed that the Vitamin-D levels in the blood of South Asians were substantially lower than their white compatriots. “We found the levels to be significantly different in comparison to Caucasians. These findings should be of concern to South Asians as a population,” says Ratnayake.

The Health Canada study’s two major components – Vitamin-D and Omega-3 – are two of the most crucial ingredients for good health. Omega-3 is an important fatty acid primarily present in fatty fish such as salmon, tuna and mackerel. It is a key ingredient in the prevention of cardio vascular disease.

“A higher percentage of South Asians are at risk of coronary heart disease. Diabetic levels among South Asians are significantly higher. It is easy to blame it all on our genetics, but it is primarily due to our diet and lifestyle,” Ratnayake says.

He explains that the South Asian diet, rich in carbohydrates and sugar, coupled with a lack of exercise, seem to have exacerbated a problem that has its roots in genetics. The fact that people have migrated to a western country such as Canada does not seem to have changed their diet, with ethnic foods from their home countries now readily available in the market. Contributing to the South Asians’ woes is nearly six months of winter weather, which is enough to keep people less physically active and bundled up.

Its the long winters that prompted the scientists to evaluate Vitamin-D levels, primarily absorbed through exposure to sunlight and not through food. Vitamin -D is considered a huge contributor towards achieving bone health and also in the prevention of cardio vascular disease, hypertension and cancer.

It is estimated that the minimum level of Vitamin-D should be 30 nanomoles per litre, with the ideal level being 50 nmol/l. The study showed that 80% of white Canadians were meeting the ideal standard in winter, while only 47% of South Asian Canadians achieved it. In summer, when there is more than 15 hours of sunlight, white Canadians meeting the ideal Vitamin-D standard increased to 93%. But during the same period, South Asians meeting the ideal standard dropped to 44%.

Says Ratnayake: “This shows that even in the summer, South Asians are not absorbing enough sunlight. Perhaps they are taking unnecessary protection from sunlight. From a health perspective, this is bad news. There is not enough Vitamin-D in the blood (of the South Asian sample) to achieve bone health.”

The lack of Vitamin-D contributes towards the onset of early arthritis, crouching and loss of teeth.

To read the full article, please visit the Financial Times of Sri Lanka at :

<http://www.ft.lk/2014/01/01/poor-health-of-canadas-south-asians-puts-their-home-countries-on-notice/>

Kindness Week in February and taking care of our heart health - by Martin Nicholas

The name February comes either from the old-Italian god *Februus* or from *februa*, signifying purification festivals celebrated in ancient Rome. February 4th, as you know, marks our **re**-gaining of independence after Colonial forced-entry and occupation for 442 years.

February also is identified as the “Heart Health Month” and it includes the celebration of the “Kindness Week” (<http://kindottawa.ca>). This site highlights five ways to demonstrate kindness and contribute to building a more caring, compassionate community in Ottawa:

1. Share your good fortune by donating to a charitable cause;
2. Volunteer your time, energy and talents to help a worthy cause;
3. Say thanks to those helping you regularly;
4. Celebrate/acknowledge kindness.
5. *Pay it Forward*:

The next time someone is kind to you, make a conscious effort to pay that kindness forward by being kind to another person. They say *Kind people* are happier, healthier and often live longer. Kindness is contagious and doesn’t cost a cent and makes a huge difference.

Kindness-in-action: The SLCAO has made a phenomenal response to a rare opportunity in January and February that epitomizes the objectives of the “Kindness Week.” Bravo to the courageous SLCAO volunteers who braced the snow and extreme cold weather to flex their muscles to fill a container with hospital electric beds. These are destined to serve Sri Lankan hospitals in areas including those seriously affected by a kidney dis-



ease, still not understandable, and hence nor manageable.

Heart Health Month: It is recommended that we consult a medical professional about the adverse effects of the lack of sleep or too much sugar on our heart health. **SLEEP:** Many studies link a lack of sleep or sleeping less than six hours a day to adverse effects on heart health. **SUGAR:** Recent findings indicate that a higher percentage of calories from added sugar are associated with significantly increased risk of cardio-vascular disease (CVD) mortality. In addition, regular consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages is associated with elevated CVD mortality.

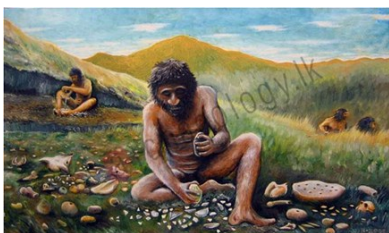
Good heart health and happiness to all in the month of February!

BALANGODA MANAWAYA

By Kasuni De Silva (Grade 9)

In Sri Lanka, some of the archeologists found skeletons of a prehistoric man who lived about 37,000 years ago. He was known as the “Balangoda man”. This is the oldest complete modern human skeleton ever to be found in Asia.

His skeletons were found during an archaeological dig in what is called a Fa-Hien cave located in Bulathsinhala, which is only 60 kilometers from Colombo. The Fa-Hien cave was named after a Chinese monk who travelled to Sri Lanka to acquire Buddhist scriptures.



According to archeologists this Balangoda man had lived in many caves and was known as the man of fire. Some of the caves that he lived in are; Beli lena, Bata-domba lena, Bellanpendipellessa and Pahiyangala. Apparently Balangoda man

was responsible for the creation of Horton Plains in the central hills. This was used for burning trees in order to catch animals.

The skull of Balangoda man is now shown in the Colombo museum. But the bones and other implements can be seen in the Ratnapura Museum. Balangoda man was also a hunter travelled far searching for food every day, and he was also a hard-working man. This cave that “Balangoda man” was found in lead to archeologists finding many of the earlier historical evidences.

We should be proud of our ancestors who developed Sri Lanka in to what is now one of the most historical places in the world. There are so much history behind Sri Lanka. Evidences of our ancestor will lead us to find what Sri Lanka was like back in the day.

In the past many historical evidences were found by people that didn’t know a lot about Sri Lanka, we can never believe the truth of what others say about something

they barley know a lot about. It’s like the same as if someone was to say something about your parents or maybe even you’re sister/brother but didn’t know them as well as you knew them it probably won’t be true. For example there are many historical tales written about King Ravana in India, but they are not the same as the historical tales written about him in Sri Lanka. People say things but that does not guarantee its right.

We should be proud of the archaeologists in our country and how they are trying to find what the historical truths about Sri Lanka are. People who know how to read “cell lipi” (words that were written on rocks) will be a step closer to finding out what really happened back in the day.

Information, views or opinions expressed on the SLCAO newsletter originates from many different sources and contributors throughout the general community. Please note that content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views and opinions of SLCAO or the editor.



A breaking news...

Bassist Hussain Jiffry has become the first Sri Lankan born to be associated with a prestigious Grammy award. The honor was bestowed upon Jiffry, who is a part of bass legend Herb Alpert and wife Lani Hall's quintet, when the group won the Best Pop Instrumental Album Award for their album 'Steppin' Out' at this year's Grammy Awards, which concluded on February 9th.

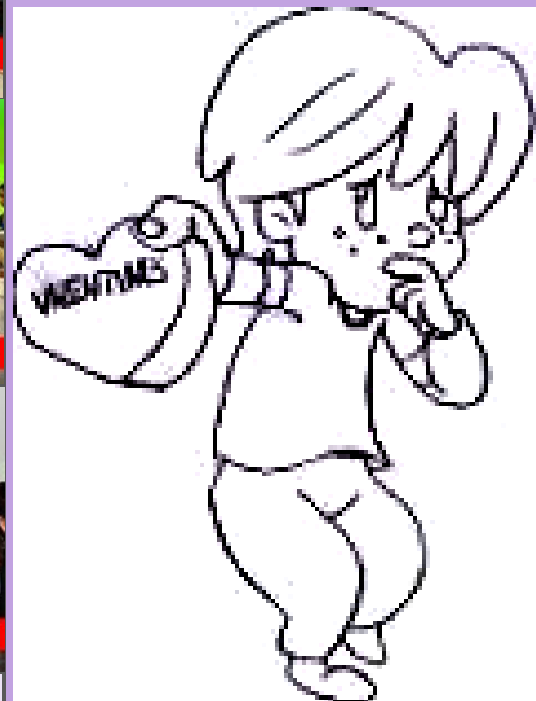
Jiffry is known for his work with well-known names in the international music scene such as Whitney Houston, Dionne Warwick and Yanni.

Jiffry, a former Wesleyite, -Wesley College, Colombo- has also been with Brazilian samba jazz legend Sergio Mendes for many years as well as, performing with 'The Earth Wind and Fire Experience' when they played live in Colombo, and at the Java jazz festival.



He graduated from the Musicians' Institute in California in 1989, and while playing random ensembles, it was his sheer talent that brought many worthwhile offers to this dedicated bassist.

A pencil sketch by Shannon Silva



Photographs: courtesy of Vishan Senevirathne