



Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya
Greater Toronto Area and Suburbs

Newsletter

January 2020 Issue

"Sarvasva Locanam Sasthram"

Knowledge is the Eye unto All



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Message from the Board of Management (BOM)

Greetings for 2020!

By now our well-wishers must have received the new year greeting card, which has become a tradition of our appreciation. We are ever grateful for their support.

We want to thank all those who participated in and contributed to alumni events in 2019. We will be looking forward to your continued commitment to connect us with any Peradeniya alumni who have not yet joined the Association. Your active role towards the growth of alumni membership is very much appreciated.

We are profoundly saddened by the passing away of Dr. Jayalath Manorathna, an illustrious Peradeniya alumnus who was very close to our Association. A special article is included in this Newsletter as a tribute to late Dr. Manorathna.

Following General Meeting-2019, the new BOM has been active in many fronts. Yet again we are pleased to have a BOM of diversity, in line with our principles of inclusiveness. Having appointed members to sub-committees as specified in the Constitution, each team has moved swiftly to develop work programs – some updates are in this Newsletter. Revamping of our Facebook page and alumni website are already in progress.

Those who participated in Summer Event last August would vouch for the memories of a wonderful Camping Trip with overnight stay (see inside for details).

'EngNet' Networking and Fellowship Night for Sri Lankan-Canadian engineering professionals will be held on Saturday, February 15th, 2020 in Scarborough. Tickets for participants are already on sale (page 2 has a special article on 'EngNet'). Our flagship event 'Back to Hantana-2020' is scheduled for Saturday, April 11th, 2020 - an important date to mark in your calendar. Having the event been held in North York (2016) and Mississauga (2018), 'Back to Hantana-2020' will be held in Brampton.

Our application submitted in October for incorporating the Association is on hold pending obtaining of authorization documents from the University.

We are pleased to announce that starting with next issue, we will be inviting articles from alumni and their families, including children, for publication in the Newsletter. We will announce instructions and guidelines in February.

Be safe and remain in *Peradeniya spirit!*



Upcoming Events

- **'EngNet': February 15th in Scarborough**
- **'Back to Hantana-2020': April 11th in Brampton – Details soon!**
- **'Children for Children' Mega Concert: Stay tuned for details!**



Engineering career excellence through networking synergies

There are over 1000 estimated engineering professionals of Sri Lankan origin who have immigrated to the GTA and aspire either starting or upgrading their engineering career in Canada. We believe that Canadian employers and professional bodies are yet to be fully aware of the quality of Sri Lankan engineering education, which consists of a completely merit-based selection and evaluation process. Many engineering professionals of Sri Lankan origin who immigrated to Canada have taken on career challenges and excelled in Canada in various capacities.


ENGNET

15 FEB 2020
6:30pm - midnight

JC Banquet Hall
1686 Ellesmere Rd, Scarborough,
ON M1H 2V5
(401 & McCowan rd)

- Buffet dinner
- Cash Bar
- Underground car parking

Tickets : \$40 per attendee
Discounted tickets available for newcomers (2018 & after)

Please contact
Chamila 416-705-8983 Thayabharan 416-727-8336 Pubudu 289-971-4629 Tharani 647-284-8744 Sunil 647-710-5281 Dhammika 647-924-7592

Organized by : Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya - GTA & Suburbs

professional contacts in industry are key to your career success

Networking & Fellowship Night

For Sri Lankan - Canadians in Engineering profession

Take the first step to get READY and RE-ALIGN your career!

- meet with over 100 engineering professionals, make contacts and learn about new opportunities
- network with peers from various industries, senior professionals and entrepreneurs for valuable insights
- connect with employers, HR professionals and recruiters and learn job market trends and expectations
- learn about PEO licensing, OSPE member benefits and Education and Training

Keynote Speakers:

01 Prof Chan Wirasinghe
Founding Dean (Emeritus) - Schulich School of Engineering
University of Calgary

02 Prof Xavier Fernando
Director of Ryerson Communications Lab
Ryerson University

Dress Code : Business Casual
This event is not for children (below 18 years)

www.peradeniyaalumnigta.com

However, there has been no structured opportunity so far for aspiring engineering professionals as a community to network and share career experiences with senior engineering fraternity in Canada. As an association, we have identified at this point that a networking event with practicing senior engineering professionals, regulatory and professional bodies, education institutions, employers and recruiters will immensely benefit the aspiring engineering professionals in their endeavor for professional recognition, career progression and relevant employment opportunities. Key areas that we intend to highlight are Canadian experience, Canadian education and training and industry connections. We want to make them realize full potential and elevate the profile of engineering professionals of Sri Lankan origin in Canada.

EngNet is our long-planned professional forum to address this situation. EngNet will trigger a sustainable mechanism where all engineering professionals of Sri Lankan origin could start networking with critical resources and enablers in the engineering practice and industry. They could take more informed career decisions to achieve professional goals.

EngNet audience will be fully open to aspiring engineering professionals and senior engineering professionals. The EngNet format will be structured with presentations and sessions to share information, networking and fellowship time, a value proposition survey and refreshments. Some renowned Canadian engineers and academics of Sri Lankan origin will contribute at EngNet. We will invite Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) and Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE). Representatives of some major employers and engineering recruiters will be present. EngNet will have presence from a few leading universities, colleges and bridging programs. We will develop the post-EngNet follow-up action plan based on event feedback and results of the survey. **Kindly share the information with your Sri Lankan-Canadian contacts who would benefit by attending this special event aimed at career success. Visit our social media and website for 'EngNet' updates:**



www.facebook.com/events/674324113099491/

www.linkedin.com/groups/12088617/

www.peradeniyaalumnigta.com

'Back to Hantana - 2020'

Exploring creations of the father of musical dramas
based on folk literature
the Late Dayananda Gunawardana

The Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya (GTA & Suburbs)
Proudly Presents.....

Back to Hantana 2020

Jayanath Bandara

Madani Malwattage

Wasantha Gunawardana

With Sri Lankan stage Personalities and Alumni Families

Hurry!
Collect your tickets early to avoid last minute disappointment.

Saturday April 11th, 2020
6.30 pm to 10.30 pm

Chinguacousy Secondary School
1370 Williams Parkway East
Brampton, L6S 1V3

Rare privilege for the entire family to witness an assortment of eye-catching performances in one place!

Tickets
Single - \$30
Children 6-12 - \$15

Nalaka - 647.519.5579
Chamila - 416.705.8983
Kapila - 647.700.7302
Priyantha - 519.824.5516
Dhammika - 647.924.7592

Hope you still have the memories of exciting 'Back to Hantana - 2018'!

Preparations are under way to hold the 4th episode of our iconic public event entertainment and engagement '**Back to Hantana - 2020**' on Saturday, April 11th, 2020 at Chinguacousy Secondary School Auditorium in Brampton, ON.

Having hosted previous three 'Back to Hantana' episodes in Mississauga (twice) and North York, this time we will be moving to the modern and easy-to-access Brampton location under a different theme.

Please keep the date in your diary and cascade the message to everyone around.

If you or any of your family members are interested in joining 'Back to Hantana - 2020' as support performers, please write to peraalumnigta@gmail.com or call Dhammika Premarathna / Secretary at 647-924-7592

General Meeting - 2019

General meeting of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya – GTA and Suburbs (AAUPGTAS) was held at Burnhamthorpe Community Center, 1500 Gulleden Dr, Mississauga on October 05th, 2019.

Chitrica Pandithasekara, master of ceremonies (MC), welcomed the attendees and commenced proceedings of General Meeting-2019. As per the pre-notified agenda, outgoing Secretary Upul Herath presented the annual report, after which outgoing Treasurer Ranjith Perera read the audited financial reports for both 2017 and 2018, and the interim financial report for 2019.

The minutes of the 2017 General Meeting and the financial reports were unanimously approved. The forum unanimously approved the proposal to incorporate the Association as a 'Not for Profit' organization under Ontario provincial law. Then Jayalath Samarakkody, the outgoing President, addressed the attendees. In his address, he highlighted all the activities that were successfully carried out during the past two years and praised all the support the Association received from the membership and emphasized the unity and camaraderie among the membership. He concluded his speech by calling attention to expanding the membership.

On behalf of the outgoing Board of Management (BOM), Dhammika Premarathna presented a few amendments to the existing constitution, which were unanimously approved by the forum. Then the floor was open for a Q&A session for the attendees and a panel comprising Dhammika Premarathna, Ranjith Perera, Jayalath Samarakkody and Upul Herath provided answers and clarifications for questions presented by attendees.

Dhammika Herath (past president of Ottawa Chapter) officiated the election of office bearers to the new BOM for the 2019/21 term. Twenty-one (21) BOM members were elected unanimously by the members.

Pubudu Edirisinghe, the new President thanked the outgoing BOM for their painstaking effort to develop the Association to its current stage and gaining excellent achievements. He said that the new BOM is rich in diversity in terms of faculties and emphasized the camaraderie of the alumni. Specifically, he identified lots of 'true spirit' in the cricket tournament and proposed that we introduce the spirit back in 2020 as the Association will be hosting the tournament. He also stressed the importance of the participation of members in the alumni events and requested members to send their feedback on events, newsletter and Facebook page.

The new Secretary Dhammike Premaratne delivered the vote of thanks and the meeting adjourned.



Past Events: Camping Trip



Summer Event concept was started in 2017 and has evolved into one of the most exciting activities in our calendar. On August 17th & 18th, 2019, we organized a camping trip, an idea that had been in our minds for some time. Participants could either return on the night of August 17th (Saturday) or stay overnight in a camping setting and return on August 18th (Sunday).



It was a memorable weekend and yet another Peradeniya style event. The error made by site authorities in fact came as a blessing in disguise. Although we had a few inconveniences, we think everyone's camaraderie made it an enjoyable event for us, with food, live music, chit-chat, fun and adventure.

Nothing makes us happier in organizing an alumni event than seeing the participation and happy faces of those attended. Many alumni said how they enjoyed, and we saw it till mid-day Sunday. Kids wanted to stay another day!



We want to thank the alumni and families for various support in many ways (a long list, including for abundant supply of food and food preparation), and the participation in true 'Peradeniya spirit' as a family.

We have decided to have the 3rd week of every August dedicated to the alumni Summer Event.

Past Events: Cricket Dinner



Cricket Dinner is an annual event organized by the Board of Management as a tradition to appreciate our alumni cricket team. Cricket Dinner-2019 was held on November 29th.

'Team Peradeniya' became champions at the 'Inter-Alumni Cricket Tournament and Family Get-together – 2019 held last July. We have earned good reputation among other alumni for our on-field and off-field conduct, and we can all be proud about it. Let us give a round of applause to 'Team Peradeniya'!



University NEWS



ICEMS 2020

International Conference on
Environmental and Medical Statistics

9th and 10th January 2020

Postgraduate Institute of Science,
University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

Department of Statistics & Computer Science, Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka and Postgraduate Institute of Science, Sri Lanka jointly organized with Department of Mathematics & Statistics, University of Maryland Baltimore County, USA

The International Conference on Environmental and Medical Statistics aims to bring forth recent developments in the field of Environmental and Medical statistics and related areas, with an objective of formulating statistical strategies to solve emerging problems of the twenty-first century. It also aims to bring together leading academics, scientists, research scholars and research students to exchange and share their experiences and research findings on various aspects of Environmental and Medical Statistics. Besides, it provides an opportunity to foster international collaborations among statisticians and statistical organizations to promote Statistics as a key technology.

Conference Topics (include, but not limited to)

Advanced statistical applications in the areas of Green Energy, Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Global Warming, Oceanography, Disaster Management, Environment Restoration, Environmental and Public Health, Biostatistics and Informatics, Clinical Data Management, Epidemiology & Public Health, Community Medicine, Pharmacology, Infectious Diseases, Statistics and machine learning.

For more information:

<http://www.pgis.pdn.ac.lk/icems/>

PERADENIYA UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT RESEARCH SESSIONS (iPUMSE) – 2019

Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

The maiden international research conference of the Faculty of Management, named as Peradeniya University International Management Research Sessions (iPUMSE) 2019 was successfully held on November 14, 2019 at the Faculty of Management, University of Peradeniya. Going in line with the conference theme 'Sustainability and competitive advantage', a Business Forum was also organized with the aim of creating a platform to integrate different perspectives representing academia, professionals from emerging industries and regulatory bodies to form a discussion on 'Creating Competitive Advantage through Sustainability with special reference to hotel, telecommunications and apparel industries in Sri Lanka' specifically focusing on the sustainability from the organizational perspective. Five renowned experts from different sectors were invited as panelists of the Business Forum, which was moderated by Dr. S. Maheswaran, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Management.



***Mano Ayya* is no more!**

Tribute to the late Dr. Jayalath Manorathna who passed away on January 11th, 2020

Born in a hamlet in Hanguranketha, he never lost his roots. He left as the same simple man. We are far from being qualified to talk about his massive contribution to the arts and culture of Sri Lanka and to the society. Volumes are written and presented about those in the last many days in many angles. Despite fake news about the condition of his health, we kept constant touch with his family and offered support whenever possible. Some of us were able to visit him in his sick bed quite a few times. Sadly, in the last few weeks he could only hear but not respond.

His strong bond with our Association began in 2012 when we hosted him and a few fellow artists for a hurriedly organized dinner. Probably the first time in his rich vocabulary, he used the term 'Peradeniya Old folks' (better explained in Sinhala as '*Peradeniya Adi Vaseen*') to address us. He identified the fun-filled Peradeniya style evening as a 'back to Peradeniya day'.

We invited him twice to light up our trademark public event 'Back to Hantana' in 2016 and 2018. While in full agreement to participate despite his busy schedule, his only focus was the success of 'Back to Hantana', never the payments – not sure how many will undertake overseas performances without such assurance. How he inspired and lifted the quality of performance of our group to public stage in two days was amazing. Humble man to the core, he was ready to perform with whoever we presented to support our cause. That gesture enabled us to place over one hundred adults and children to perform along side with him – a life time opportunity to many. Never would he approach any one with anger. We saw how he used humour to convince or correct others when needed.

We were privileged to see his intellectual capacity and knowledge when developing themes, programs, scripts and selecting people. His ability to connect with any audience instantly is truly unthinkable. Those who were present at 'Back to Hantana' 2016 and 2018 episodes would vouch for that. Despite his stature and wisdom, he was still a great student. Last time, he lamented missing out of an opportunity to visit Canadian Theatre. Eagerness he displayed to explore Drumheller Museum in Calgary was another testimony.

He was elated to see our attempt to showcase Sri Lankan arts and culture in Canada and commended us for undertaking such initiatives as hardly such attempts are made even in Sri Lanka today.

We will require several terabytes of data capacity to capture his humour. When someone asked how the drinks supply by Peradeniya folks in Canada was, he quipped 'Oh plenty but they gave me a thimble to drink'.

Without our knowledge, he had been our stellar global ambassador too. He had shared many good stories of our work with his contacts outside Canada.

With a sobering heart, we attempt to absorb memories of his voice, performance, wit and touch. We will continue our journey of promoting Sri Lankan arts and culture as a tribute to dearest *Mano Ayya* – a great son of Peradeniya.



Obituaries

Prof. Vini Vitharana



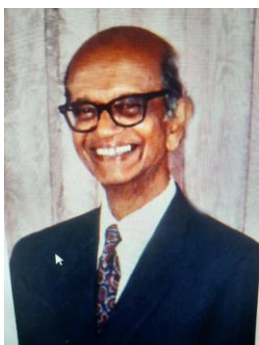
Eminent Sri Lankan Language, literature, religion and archeology educator Prof. Vini Vitharana passed away on Dec 1st, 2019 at the age of 91. He was born on June 2nd, 1928 in Tangalle.

Prof. Vitharana was educated at the University of London (bachelors with honors, University of London and Master of Arts, University of London, 1959). He was an assistant teacher at Mahinda College, Galle from 1949 to 1953, and St. Thomas' College, Mount Lavinia from 1954 to 1957. He completed his Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Peradeniya in 1966.

He rose from lecturer to associate professor of Sinhala during his 21-year tenure at Vidyodaya University from 1960 to 1981. He was professor of Sinhala at Ruhuna University from 1981 to 1993. He was a visiting professor at several higher education institutions - Postgraduate Institute Archaeology and Research in Colombo, since 1993, Buddhist and Pali University from 1996 to 1997, Sabaragamuwa University from 1997 to 1998 and Sri Jayewardenepura University.

Prof. Vitharana served as assistant editor of Sinhala Encyclopedia attached to the Ministry of Cultural Affairs. He was a recipient of award for Sinhala Literature in 1962. Prof. Vitharana was the President of the Panel for Sinhala Literature of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs from 1970 to 1977 and Assistant Director of UNESCO Sri Lanka Cultural Triangle Project from 1981 to 1985.

Prof. M D Dassanayake



Emeritus Professor of Botany of the University of Peradeniya and colossus of Sri Lankan botanical landscape Professor M D Dassanayake passed away recently in Kandy.

Born in Kurunegala in 1921 and educated at the government boys' school Kuliypitiya and Dharmaraja College Kandy, he passed London Matriculation at the age of 17 and had to wait until he was 18 years old in order to enter the then Ceylon University College to read a Medical Degree. Without a free education system and due to great depression, he had to instead follow a degree in science from 1938. He was in the first batch of 3 students reading a special degree in botany. He read his MA at the University of Cambridge and PhD at the University of Manchester from 1955 to 1957.

He joined the Department of Botany of the University of Ceylon and later the University of Peradeniya and served until his retirement in 1988. The late professor Dassanayake was the first head of the Department of Botany.

Among many contributions to science in Sri Lanka, he is credited with his teaching of botany at the University, contribution to the Flora Ceylon Project, Plant Genetic Resource Centre and also being the Chief Editor of the National Journal of Science (Botany). In his honor, every year since 1991, The Professor M D Dassanayake Gold Medal is awarded to the best student in the Botany Special Degree program at the University of Peradeniya. A plant species endemic to Sri Lanka in the tea family discovered by two taxonomists in Nuwaraeliya and Badulla areas was named 'Gordonia Dassanayekei' in recognition of his contribution to botany in Sri Lanka.

We are saddened by the demise of Prof. Dassanayake, an illustrious Sri Lankan, and wish to convey our condolences to Mrs. Dassanayake and the family.

Summary of Objectives of the Association

(pursuant to ARTICLE THREE of the Constitution)

- MOBILIZE & DRIVE ALUMNI
- SUPPORT & PROMOTE UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA
- PROVIDE SERVICES AND BENEFITS
- SUPPORT PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MEMBERS
- SUPPORT PERADENIYA ALUMNI NEWCOMERS TO CANADA
- RECOGNIZE ACHIVEMENTS
- COMMUNICATE & INTERACT
- CONTRIBUTE TO ADVANCEMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA
- The Association shall not engage or promote or participate in any political or religious activities OR any social activity that can directly or indirectly lead to engagement, promotion or participation of any political or religious activity and/or in conflict with the above objectives. Any exception will be evaluated by the Board of Management based on merits. However, this principle does not aim at restricting any individual choices.