



In This Issue

- Page 1: Editorial
- Pages 2-5: Annual General Meeting (AGM) reminders
- Page 6: MGCAANA Announcements
- Pages 7-10: New Year Celebrations
- Page 11: Birth announcements
- Pages 12-13: Remembering Mrs. Soma Pujitha Goonawardhana



Mahamaya Girls' College
Alumnae Association of North
America

Dear Members,

It is with great pleasure, I compile this issue of Maya Puwath preceding the 11th Annual General Meeting to be held in Ottawa, Canada!!! I encourage sister alumnae to attend the AGM on May 24th. This is an opportunity to mingle with the Mahamaya community, reconnect with old friends and make new friends, as well as enjoy the sights Ottawa offers. I extend my gratitude to fellow alumnae in Ottawa for their hospitality and opening their homes for the AGM/dinner. A note of appreciation is due to the local organizing committee as well. First few pages of this volume is devoted to assist plan your trip.

Happy Sinhala New Year to everyone!!! Having lived in the United States for the last 26 years, I thought I will refresh my memory and reflect on the symbolism and purpose of these celebrations. Sinhala (and Tamil) new year marks the end of the traditional harvest season to celebrate fruits of harvest. I fondly recall the buzz of activity at the “kamethe” near our home. This time coincides with one of the two times in the year when the Sun is directly above Sri Lanka, thus this is one of the warmest times in Sri Lanka. The mating call of the male “koha” (an Asian cuckoo bird), a sound associated with this time can be observed in literature devoted to New Year celebrations.

This is a time of traditions for everyone. Yet, regardless of a family’s traditions, it is time to rejoice , share the bounty of harvest, time for family, neighbors and friends. Thus, the sharing of food, the games and relaxation after an year of hard work. Religion plays an integral part of these celebrations. Pages 7-10 of this volume is devoted to New Year Celebrations --art by one of our members, a beautiful poem by a member’s daughter and celebrations in three communities in the United States.

Finally, it is indeed a pleasure to include the article on Mrs. Soma Pujitha Goonawardhana , who was instrumental in attaining the reputation in academics and extra-curricular activities Mahamaya Girls College is today. Thus, paving the path to maintain and improve that by those that followed her.

Vajeera Dorabawila, Ph.D.

MGCAANA ANNOUNCEMENTS



Mahamaya Girls' College Alumnae Association in North America (MGCAANA)

Cordially invites you to the

11th Annual MGCAANA AGM and Dinner Dance

Held on Sunday, May 24, 2015

In Ottawa, Canada



AGM

Venue: Residence of Dr. Samudrika
Amarakone

Time: 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Dinner Dance

Venue: Residence of Mrs. Deepani
Waidyaratne

Time: 7.00 p.m.

RSVP by April 24, 2015 to mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com



For more information, please contact:

USA: 352-872-8809 (cell) / 352-333-7229 (home) (Sriyani)

Canada: 613-521-7128 (Samudrika), 613-400-9196 (Vihara), 613-692-2864 (Deepani)

Membership Renewal

We are excited about the progress we have made so far with our new President and BOD. However without your continuous support it is difficult to make things work. In this season of giving we would like to remind you to renew your membership for 2014/ 2015. As you know membership fee for students is 15 \$ and 25 \$ for regular members.

Also we appreciate your support in spreading the word about MGCAANA and introducing new members to our sisterhood.

How you can renew your membership:

By Mail:

You can pay your membership fee via check written in favor of 'MGCAANA' and post to the address below.

Treasurer, MGCAANA

2417 NE 20th,

Renton, WA 98056

OR Online:

Log in to our website (link mentioned below) and pay your membership fee via credit card or paypal account:

<http://www.mahamayaalumna.org/RenewalMembershipForm.html>

Attractions in Ottawa

Parliament Hill and Buildings

Category: Government buildings; Historic sites

Description: Three Gothic Revival-style buildings, located on a 170-foot bluff overlooking the Ottawa River, house the offices of the members of Parliament, the House of Commons and the Senate. Free guided tours delve into Canadian history and explain the workings of the political system.



Rideau Canal

Category: Historic sites; Trails; Bodies of water

Description: One of the oldest landmarks in Ottawa, this canal is filled with boats in the summer and becomes the "World's Longest Skating Rink" in the winter.



National War Memorial

Category: Monuments & statues

Description: Located at the intersection of Wellington St. and Elgin St. just a few steps from Parliament Hill, this large granite and bronze war monument originally was built to commemorate the First World War. It was dedicated by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth on the eve of the Second World War in May 1939 during their Canadian tour.



Canadian War Museum

Category: History museums; Military museums

Description: The Canadian War Museum is more than a museum that is internationally renowned for its symbolic architecture; it is synonym for inspiring and touching stories. Canada's rich military history is showcased through personal stories, artwork, photographs and interactive presentations.



Notre Dame Basilica

Category: Religious sites

Description: This beautiful and ornate gothic style cathedral is recognized by its twin spires.



National Gallery of Canada

Category: Art museums; History museums

Description: Dating back to 1980, this visual arts museum holds in trust a collection of European and Canadian paintings, sculptures, prints, drawings and photos.



ByWard Market

Category: Neighborhoods; Flea & street markets; Specialty shops

Description: ByWard Market is one of Canada's oldest and largest public markets. Within an area roughly four blocks square, you'll find museums, cafes, specialty food shops, boutiques, galleries, restaurants, pubs, hair & aesthetics salons and more! Easily accessible on foot, by transit or by car, the ByWard Market offers a unique experience for all.



Peace Tower

Category: Observation decks & towers

Description: Tall tower located in the front middle of the Center Block building of the Canadian Parliament. Contains an observation deck, clock, carillon and a war memorial hall. Admission is by admission to the Center Block — take a tour of parliament and then follow up with a visit here at leisure.



Ottawa Locks

Category: Landmarks & points of interest

Description: In use since 1832, these locks link the Ottawa River with the Rideau Canal and are still operated by hand.



Canadian Museum of Nature

Category: Museums; Natural history museums

Description: Canada's national natural history museum offers world-class galleries in a handsome heritage "castle." Marvel at dinosaurs and other ancient reptiles in the Talisman Energy Fossil Gallery. See grizzlies and other wild animals up close in beautiful dioramas in the Mammal Gallery, and so much more.



Accommodations in Ottawa

Hotels around the airport -MacDonald Cartier airport (YOW) :

1. Southway Hotel, 2431 Bank Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K1V 8R9
Phone. 613 737 0811 - 2 queen and 2 king rooms are available \$358-398 x 2 nights
2. Holiday Inn Express Hotel and Suites, 2881 Gibford av, Ottawa, ON, K1V2L9
Ph. 613 247 9500
3. Ramada Ottawa on the Rideau, 2059 Price of Wales Drive, Ottawa, ON
613 288 3500
4. Day's Inn, 366 Huntclub Rd. , Ottawa, K1V1C1
Ph. 613 739 7555
5. Residence Inn Ottawa Marriott, 1172 Walkley Road, Ottawa
613 523 9600
6. Holiday Inn Express & Suites, 770 Huntclub Rd. ,Ottawa, K1V 1C3
Ph. 613 738 2020

To apply for visa:

1. This website gives information <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/apply-how.asp>
2. Also it is best for students to start early and contact the Canadian embassy in the USA and find out the process to apply for visa.
<http://can-am.gc.ca/washington/index.aspx?lang=eng>



What to do in Ottawa?

By Medha Dorabawila Bulumulla

Ottawa is an interesting city filled with history and sights to see. Although you might not think there is a lot to do in Ottawa, there are plenty of great things to do there.

Canada Aviation and Space Museum

Do you have an interest in airplanes? This museum is filled with plenty of beautiful planes. People of all ages will enjoy this. There are numerous aircrafts that you can sit in. The tickets are \$13 for adults, \$10 for seniors, \$10 for students (ages 13+), \$8 for children (ages 3-12) and free for children under 2 years. For 2 adults and 3 children, it costs \$30. For more information please visit their [site](#).



National Capital Greenbelt

For those who like the outdoors, the National Capital Greenbelt is the right thing for you. Depending on the weather you can go boating, camping, cross-country skiing, cycling, hiking, walking, horseback riding, go on a picnic, go on a tour, snowshoeing, and tobogganing. There is no entrance fee. For more information please visit their [site](#).



Parliament Hill and Buildings

This tour is an interesting sight to see. Here you can learn about Canada's history and see amazing architecture at the same time. The tour is free. For more information please visit their [site](#).



Royal Canadian Mint

This sight is a great place. Here you can learn how Canadian money is made. You can see medals from the 2010 Olympics and hold a gold bar. The tours are \$4.50 for adults, \$2.25 for children, \$5.00 for seniors and free for infants. If you are planning to go during the weekday the prices are a little higher, so please check the [site](#) for more information.



National Gallery of Canada

If you enjoy looking at art, this is the place for you. It features different types of exhibitions including Janet Cardiff: Forty-Part Motet, Clocks for Seeing: Photography, Time and Motion, M.C. Escher: The Mathematician, For the Record: Early Canadian Travel Photography and *This Little Painting Masterpiece in Focus*. For general admission it is \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors, \$10 for students with and ID, \$6 for children (11 years and younger), and it is \$24 for a group of 2 adults and 3 children. For more information please visit the [site](#).



MGCAANA Announcement



We are going 100% Eco Friendly Voting system in 2015

Dear Members

Another exciting year has come to an end. We are almost in the process of gathering profiles from our 2015-2016 candidates who would love to volunteer their time. Ballot papers will be ready soon to put on our MGCAANA web site. This year BOD members, the executive board have decided to go 100% eco friendly voting system. We will post all our candidates profiles in MGCAANA website with a link so that you can read about them. Then we are going to conduct our election online. We will also provide you with the steps how to go to online voting pages, which link to go to and then to cast your vote. We hope we can up and run this system by April 25th and keep it open until the midnight of the day prior to the USA Tele-conference AGM meeting. This date will be announced at a later date in a separate email.

If anyone wants the printed ballot papers, then you must contact us via [mahamay alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:mahamay_alumnae@yahoo.com). We are happy to mail to you if you inform us early.

Meantime, the most important thing is to renew your membership to be eligible to vote in our election. Your membership is the key to our success.

We are looking forward to see you all at our AGM in Ottawa, Canada.

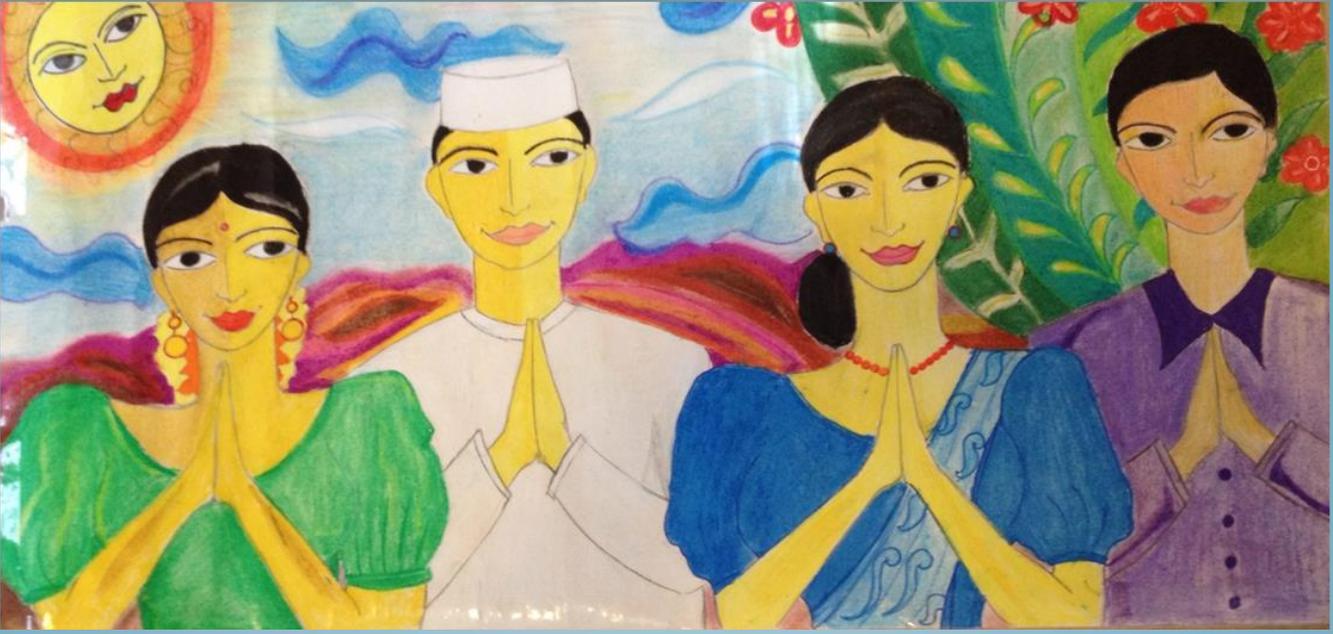
Thank you.

Sincerely,
Sriyani Dissanayake
On behalf of BOD & current president of MGCAANA.

MGCAANA Contact: [mahamaya alumnae@yahoo.com](mailto:mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com)

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By Hashini Mohottala,



New Year

Flowers soft scents floats through the air,
And no one feels a bit of despair.

Rambutang and Jamboo are both fully ripe,
And anyone can just pick one and bite.

Adults and children both get some new clothes.
Maybe more, that's how it goes.

There are kawum, Kokis, games and happy faces,
While others enjoy,
at their own paces.

Now you've all,
Had a chance to hear,
Of what I think,
Of Sri Lankan New Year!

May the Triple Gems bless us all
And my wishes for Happiness, Peace, and good health for all!

Oba Samata, Sammaya Sathuta Piri, Suba Aluth Awruddak Weava!

-Samadhi Ranaweera-
Grade 3
Frost Elementary
East Brunswick, NJ

Connecticut Event at Connecticut Buddhist Vihara -Pictures Courtesy - Hashini Mohottala



Boston Event at New England Buddhist Vihara - Pictures Courtesy - Preeni Sandanayake



Washington DC Event at Wheaton International Buddhist Center in Maryland

Pictures Courtesy - Rohan de Saram Mohottala



Birth Announcements

Announcing births of Mahamaya alumnae and MGCAANA members. Congratulations to proud parents and wishing them all the best for years to come!

Web Master Yamuna Kollalpitiya and her husband Saman are announcing the birth of their bundles of joy, Senudi and Sethun. They were born on March 19th and were 4 lb 10oz and 4 lb 1.5 oz.



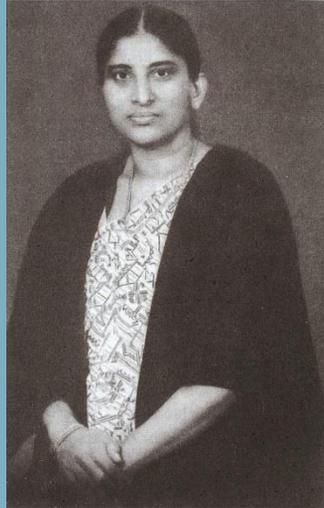
Malika Godamudunage, our BOD member and her husband Kasun Imaduwege are announcing the birth of their first lovely baby girl Mayumi Dulanima Imaduwege. She was born on 14th of March 2015. Both baby and the mother are in an excellent health.



**Remembering Mrs. Soma Pujitha Goonawardhana,
Principal, Mahamaya Girls College, Kandy – from 1951 to 1972**

Nirmala Gunapala

In this April issue of MAGCANNA Newsletter I felt that it is timely for us the past students of Mahamaya who were in school prior to 1972, to revisit our memories of our school years under Principal Mrs. Soma Pujitha Goonawardhana and remember her with our gratitude. The 32nd death anniversary of Mrs. Goonawardhana falls on the 25th of April 2015. Let's remember her by engaging in meritorious deeds and passing merit to her to attain Supreme Nibbana.



We truly value Mrs. Goonawardhana's utmost dedication and commitment to the school for 21 years, and to us in our education and the future. Our principal was absolutely a great lady who served the school from 1951 to 1972 with innumerable achievements that by end of her tenure, elevated the school to be one of the best Buddhist girls' schools in the island excelling both in education and athletics. Mrs. Goonawardhana created an environment for Sinhala Buddhist girls to grow up with confidence and aspire to reach heights while being firmly grounded by cultural and religious values. Although Mahamaya College upheld Sinhala Buddhist values, it never prevented the student population from being diverse. We had students from other ethnic and religious communities studying with us who valued the education at Mahamaya. This did add quite a richness to our school life.

Even after so many years those of us who studied during Mrs. Goonawardhana's time would still remember her as our "strict" principal. I am sure many of you would say "I was so scared of her!". It is true that she maintained strict discipline in school and expected students to be mindful of the values we uphold in and out of school. She was not the smiling principal who would reach out and pat you on the shoulder and let you run along. She was not the principal to whom you would run up to find a chance to have a little chat with. She was firm and expected us to follow school rules and do our best in everything we do. I am sure there still are many memories among Mahamayans of that era that would go like "I got caught by Mrs. Goonawardhana....." when some mischief got out of hand. Getting a punishment was not that rare. Most often this would be a call to the principal's office (for us back then this felt something like facing the death row!) to receive a stern look and a few stern words that lived in our poor beating hearts for quite some time! Now, after all these years, if we try to recollect these memories they surely would be a collection of amusing little stories.

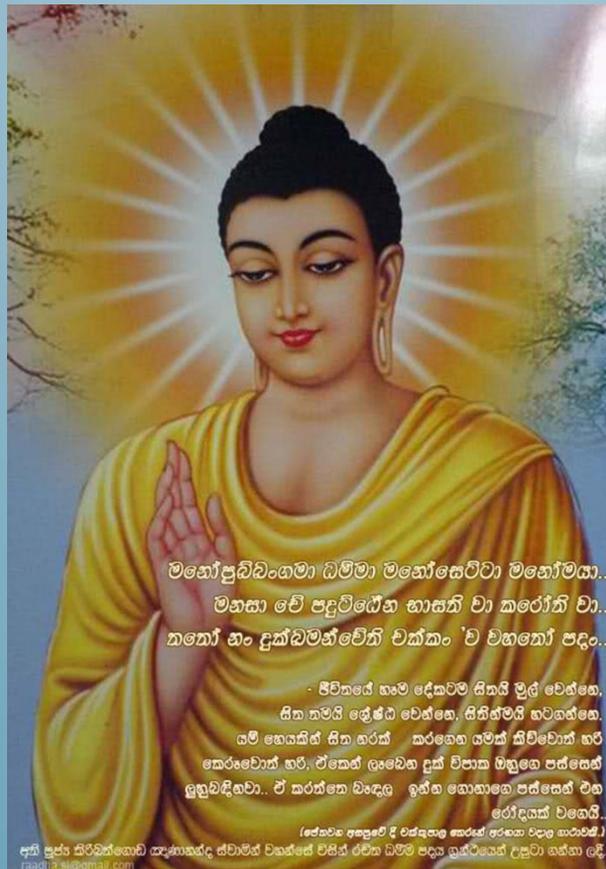
While keeping a stern outlook on rules and etiquette Mrs. Goonawardhana took it to her heart to see that Mahamaya students succeed in education to achieve a good future. Under her leadership the teachers too excelled in teaching and nurturing of students under their charge to the best. Mrs. Goonawardhana was a tower of strength to all at Mahamaya including the parents of Mahamaya students. The values she instilled in her students and the guidance she gave have led them to be successful in life in so many different ways, all around the world. Today, many of them besides being successful in careers, some with awards and accolades, have also raised their own children and are having the joy of grandchildren.

This year is especially significant for us to get together and remember Mrs. Goonawardhana. Besides her 32nd death anniversary this month, her 100th Birthday also falls on the 6th of June, 2015. MAGCAANA member and Founder Mrs. Sujatha Werake, MAGCAANA President Mrs. Sriyani Dissanayake and I, along with the support from all in MAGCAANA look forward to collect 'memories' from all those who studied at Mahamaya during Mrs. Goonawardhana's time to publish a book in her memory. We hope to complete the publication by August this year. We invite all Mahamayans around the world to give your memories as an article, a poem, or a short piece with memorable incidences or events that are significant to you in remembering Mrs. Goonawardhana. You can write either in English or Sinhalese. You can also share any photographs that you have with Mrs. Goonawardhana to the publication.

Those of you who joined Mahamaya after 1972 and do not know Mrs. Goonawardhana, might know family members, grandmothers, mothers, aunts, sisters, cousins who studied at Mahamaya during Mrs. Goonawardhana's time. Please help us by asking them to give their memories to include in this publication. We value your support in this effort in remembering one of our greatest Mahamaya Principals! Thank you!

Nirmala

Nirmala Gunapala, Ph.D., MLIS, New Mexico State University, USA (nirmalag@nmsu.edu)



A PUBLICATION OF THE MAHAMAYA GIRLS' COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF NORTH AMERICA

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE

Priyanka Jayakody, Sriyani Dissanayake, Vajeera Dorabawila