



MAYA PUWATH

Volume 5 Issue 3 –June 2009

Dhammapada :

"If by giving up a lesser happiness, one may behold a greater one, let the wise man give up the lesser happiness in consideration of the greater happiness." ~ Lord Buddha

Dear Readers,

We have just completed our fourth successful year of the MGCAANA. Since we began, we have started and completed many projects. The 5th annual general meeting was held in Des Moines, Iowa. The annual general meeting marks the beginning of a new year for the organization. New members were elected for the Board of Directors which was done by the votes of all our members.

We extend a warm welcome to the new Board of Directors while saying a fond farewell to the outgoing office members. They have done their best and given their valuable time to make MGCAANA what it is today. We appreciate the time and effort put in by all Board members and are grateful for the work you all have done. Great progress in any project is due to the dedication and hard work of its members.

We hope we can work together and make more progress with our new Board of Directors. Each person has a unique approach and talent that will help MGCAANA move forward and become more successful.

We also take this opportunity to say a heartfelt thank you to our member Neranjika Dissanayaka and her husband Sanjaya Amarathunga for their hospitality and generosity. The Amarathunga family were great hosts to all our MGCAANA members and their guests. This was truly a magnanimous gesture on their part.

Editorial Committee: Nazrana CaffoOr, Priyanka Jayakody, Dakshika Bandaranayake, Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-
light.

In summer quite the other way
I have to go to bed by day.
~ Robert Louis Stevenson



Then followed that beautiful
season... Summer....
Filled was the air with a dreamy
and magical light; and the land-
scape
Lay as if new created in all the
freshness of childhood.
~Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

A Message from the Newly Elected President ...

We have just completed yet another year with lots of accomplishments. I am looking forward to what I hope is another successful year for our beloved organization, MGCAANA. While I find it hard to believe how quickly the time has passed, I look around every day and see the energy and productivity of my fellow alumnae and what we are achieving. It gives me great hope as MGCAANA begins its fifth year.

My sincere thanks to the outgoing Board of Directors and the Executive Committee members for all their hard work during the year of 2008 /09 and I warmly welcome the new board of directors & the executive committee for the year 2009/10. Thanks also to all of you who have renewed membership or joined MGCAANA recently. Those of you who are still not members or who have still not renewed your membership, please remember to do so. Your contribution is of great importance to us and our ability to continue helping MGCAANA community as well as our alma mater.

You have elected a board to represent you, the membership. Our ability to do that is greatly aided by input we receive from the membership at large: board members are creative and energized, but we need to hear from you. I am requesting all of you to give your ideas and your input on how MGCAANA is performing. These new ideas would help us serve the community better.

I invite you to become involved; the experience is priceless. With a positive attitude and approach, we can accomplish many great things. I look forward to hearing from you and to working with you in the year ahead!

Sincerely,

Himashinie Diyabalanage
President MGCAANA, 2009/2010

Congratulations to the newly elected Executive Committee & Board of Directors!

Dasmanthie Chin De Silva—Secretary/Director

Erandi Ranaweera—Director

Gayathri Samarasinghe— Director

Himashinie Diyabalanage—President

Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa—Treasurer/Director

Sumudu Leelananda—Vice President/Director

Vihara Dharmarathna—Web Manager/Director

Dear Memories of the 5th Annual General Meeting of MGCAANA...

It was Wednesday, the 20th of May, 2009. We left Salt Lake City, Utah around 10:30 p.m. heading East on I-80. Three of us, me, my husband Prasad, and our friend Suresh, took turns driving and sleeping until we reached Des Moines, Iowa on Thursday around 4:30 p.m. We drove over night around 18 hours to attend the Annual General Meeting of MGCAANA.

When we reached the Amaratunga residence they were cooking, cleaning, decorating, etc as if they were getting ready for a wedding. On Neranjika akki's kitchen table I could see the menu for four days and she was ticking them off as she goes. I tried to help her but I was too tired and sleepy after a long drive.

We woke up next day and started from where we left the previous day. By the afternoon, Erandi akki and Ravi ayya (Suriyaarachchis) who drove from Dallas, Texas, joined the group. With Ravi Ayya, Sanjaya Ayya, Prasad, and Suresh, the comedy had already begun. The house was full of love and laughter. We even have pictures of Ravi ayya cutting onions with sunglasses on. It was lot of fun even getting ready for this event. Himashinie akki joined us in the evening to make sandwiches for the following day. She flew in from New Mexico. Mr. and Mrs. Werake's arrival around 11:30 p.m. was the most exciting part of the day. All the boys wanted to go to the airport but Neranjika akki didn't dare trust these guys to pick her dearest teacher up.

Next day, the 23rd of May 2009, was the day all of us were waiting for. Neranjika Akki meticulously attended to every detail. We got ready, had breakfast, and went to the Waukee Public Library, where we had our meeting. Our honorary members worked hard to get the flags up, tables arranged, cameras and projector setup, and even arranged the snack table for us. With all these serious work going on they didn't forget to have some fun and make us laugh. One by one the MGCAANA members arrived at the Waukee Library. Sumudu Leelananda, Lakmini Widanapathirana and her husband Achila, and Isanka Ediriweera and her husband Umesh drove that morning from Ames, Iowa. Mrs. Deepthi Weerappuli and her husband Dr. Parakrama drove from Detroit, Michigan.

Finally we were ready for the meeting and Mrs. Werake invited the boys whom by then had agreed to become honorary members, to attend the meeting too. It was the time to wrap up a successful year at MGCAANA and to start another prosperous year with a new committee. After my welcome speech, Mrs. Werake addressed the crowd on behalf of the advisory committee. Then Erandi akki presented the Annual Report on behalf of our secretary, Pamuditha Mahadiulwawa. Our treasurer, Himashinie akki, presented the annual budget following her speech. Mrs. Deepthi Weerappuli not only provided the music for the school song and the National Anthem but also helped us as our elected returning officer, with counting the secret ballots to elect the next Board of Directors. We walked out of the Waukee Library that afternoon with a new and an energetic administration for MGCAANA.

After the meeting, when we reached the Amaratunga residence, Neranjika akki was getting ready for the dinner. Our great musicians, Mrs. Deepthi Weerappuli, Prasad, Suresh, and Sanjaya Ayya were getting ready to entertain us. Everyone was excited and the Amaratunga family was on top of everything. There wasn't anything that they hadn't thought about. We had a great night with wonderful food, lots of music, and lots of laughter. There was also a beautiful cake with the Mahamaya logo on top, to celebrate the completion of a successful year at MGCAANA. Before the dinner, we started our sing-along with the music of Mrs. Deepthi Weerappuli's keyboard, Prasad's and Suresh's guitars, and Sanjaya Ayya's "Rabana." After the grand dinner we continued our singing until 4 a.m.!!! Breathtaking voices of Sanjaya ayya and Isanka akki lead the others with no wasted moments. Fortunately, Himashinie Akki had provided us with lyrics of 200 songs! Even after 4 a.m. the boys had stuff to talk and comment about. I think it was about 6 a.m. when we saw the beds.

Sunday, the 24th was the rest day for everyone. We woke up late and had a very relaxing day talking about old Maya memories. We played ping-pong and went to see the Des Moines city. I have to agree, Mr. and Mrs. Werake are still the best ping pong players among us.

Monday morning everyone left the Amaratunga residence one by one. It was time to get back home and get ready for the boring everyday life. But everyone was happy that we had the most wonderful Memorial Day weekend in Des Moines, Iowa and went home with the memories that will last until we get together again for our 6th AGM. It was definitely a trip that was worth the 18 hour drive each way. Amaratungas were absolutely wonderful hosts who made this event a great success. I would like to extend a big thank you to the Amaratunga family for their unconditional support and to everyone who attended our event with dedication.

~ **Gayathri Samarasingha, President 2008/2009**

5th AGM in Pictures ...



L to R: Gayathri Samarasingha; Himashinie Diya-
balanage; Erandi Ranaweera



Sujatha Werake, addressing the group

The 5th
AGM was
held at the
Waukee
Public Li-
brary in
Des
Moines,
Iowa on
May 23rd,
2009



L to R: Deepthi Weerappuli, Erandi Ranaweera, Gayathri Samarasingha,
Neranjika Dissanayaka, Sujatha Werake, Himashinie Diyalabanage, Isanka
Ediriweera, Lakmini Widanapathirana, Sumudu Leelananda

Thank
you to all
members
and their
families
who trav-
elled far
to be at
the 5th
AGM...



The honorary members



Himashinie Diya-
balanage presenting
the Annual Report



The MGCAANA members

5th Annual General Meeting in Iowa: A Memorable Event

I returned home on May 16th after a month-long visit to Sri Lanka. In my absence my husband had to book the air tickets and make arrangements for our trip to West Des Moines, Iowa, for the Annual general Meeting of MGCAANA that was to be held on Saturday, May 23rd. It has become a tradition to have our AGM on the Memorial Day weekend to make use of the three days. By the time I arrived home, two tickets had already been bought to leave Seattle on Friday afternoon. "What is the hotel that we are going to stay?" I asked. "Neranjika insisted that we stay with her family. I realized that there was no way I could book a hotel with Neranjika's plans." my husband said. I know Neranjika well enough to understand my husband's situation.

We reached the airport in West Des Moines, Iowa, around 9:00 pm. As soon as we came out the door, Neranjika and Sanjaya were there just on time to pick us up. We had never been to Des Moines before. Des Moines, Iowa, is a center for insurance industry, financial services, and publishing business. From the airport we passed the office buildings, corn fields, and new developments to reach their beautiful, brand new house. When we reached their home, Gayathri Samarasinghe and her husband Prasad Gankande, their friend Suresh Subasinghe from Lake City, Utah, Erandi and Ravi Suriyaarachchi from Dallas, Texas, and Himashinie Diyabalanage from Los Alamos, New Mexico, Isanka Ediriweera and her husband Umesh from Minnesota, Lakmini Widanapathirana and her husband Achila and Sumudu Leelananda from Ames, Iowa had already arrived. Most of them were in the kitchen making Sri Lankan style sandwiches for the next day's event. The dinner was waiting for us. The Amaratunga children, Chethana, Chayana and Chilana were already in bed. Ravi, Prasad and Suresh were churning out jokes from every possible opportunity and one could hear the contagious laughter going on through the night. After dinner both of us went to bed around 12 midnight.

Deepthi and her husband Parakrama Weerappuli had driven from Detroit, Michigan and were in a hotel at the time. I learned that Parakrama is a Mayan too. His kindergarten years were spent at Mahamaya when there were boys in kindergarten classes until late fifties! To my surprise, I found out that Neranjika started the day in the morning, by running 12 miles, before we arrived, to prepare herself for the upcoming marathon. Can you imagine that? (A week later Sanjaya and Neranjika participated in that 12 mile marathon.) As some of you might know, Neranjika was a national level short distance runner during her school years.

Preparation for the AGM had started at Amaratungas' about a month earlier. I learned that the grocery shopping was done in Chicago for a special kind of fish that was needed for her menu. She had prepared menus for 4 days. I gathered that the cooking and baking for the AGM had started a week earlier. Lump Rice packets wrapped in banana leaf was something we really enjoyed. Mass production of lump rice, patties, cutlets, Samosa, pastries, rolls, sandwiches, were all done during the week and were refrigerated. She proved herself that she is a great cook and a grand scale organizer who can balance a full-time job, three little boys, a household, a marathon, and a three-day event. This was possible of course with the support of her loving husband, Sanjaya Amaratunga. I got to know that Achila was the great "wrapper" of lump rice packets. I heard that Achila, Lakmini, and Dilshan who live within a short distance were a great help to Neranjika in making short-eats as well. Our President Gayathri had done the cake. Neranjika's "To Do List" tucked in the kitchen, that got ticked off time to time seemed to have worked out very well. Everything was planned well and done perfectly. The quantity and quality and variety of food that they had prepared for the AGM were enough for a much larger festival. All we had to do was eat and eat. Thank you guys!

Everything went well beyond our expectations. A BIG thank you to our wonderful hosts Neranjika and Sanjaya. Thank you to Chethana, Chayana and Chilana for sharing their parents and the house with us, giving up your rooms for a few days. Thank you Mr. Dissanayake (Neranjika's father who is visiting) for your help as well. They had organized the event so perfectly. We who gathered in Des Moines, Iowa were so fortunate to have got the opportunity to spend few days with each other, feasting and singing, playing Table Tennis and pool in their beautiful basement, playing music until dawn, and laughing. Ravi, the team leader of the laughing club, did not take a rest until he left on Monday morning. Believe me, our Saturday night sing-along went on until 4 am the next day!!! Sanjaya is an excellent lead singer. We all sang nonstop.

Sunday afternoon we went sightseeing, and saw the city and suburbs. Sunday night we started singing again after dinner even without Deepthi Weerappuli at the keyboard. We still had two guitars, shakes and the drum. That went on until 12 midnight. No matter where you went, or what you did, you could hear the laughter all day and all night long during those three days. The boys didn't sleep and they didn't let anybody else sleep either. All in all, we had a fabulous time in Iowa. We left Iowa on Monday morning. Finally the Amaratungas got to rest, and catch up with their sleep. Neranjika later wrote in her email that her "tummy still hurts with all the laughing we had during the weekend."

Those of you who could not attend the event, missed a great time. May be next year you can catch up with us. Amaratunga family, thank you for putting up with us and doing everything you could possibly do to make ourselves comfortable by attending even to the tiniest details. You planned the event so well. It was so much fun. Thank you again!

~Sujatha Werake

More pictures from the 5th AGM...



Singing along...



The musicians for the night..

Laughter

Friends



L to R: Isanka Ediriweera, Sujatha Werake, Shashi, Sumudu Leelananda



L to R: Gayathri Samarasingha; Himashinie Diya-balanage; Indunil

Memories ...



Good times

The dinner following the 5th AGM...



The dinner table



The Cake



The hosts, Sanjaya & Neranjika



Cutting the cake



At the dinner...

*A heart felt thank you to the Amarathunga family for hosting the
5th AGM in Des Moines, Iowa*



Thank you to those who came to the 5th Annual General Meeting in Des Moines Iowa:

Deepthi Weerappuli and her husband Parakrama—Detroit, Michigan

Erandi Ranaweera and husband Ravi — Dallas, Texas

Gayathri Samarasinghe and her husband Prasad —Logan, Utah

Himashinie Diyabalanage—Los Alamos, New Mexico

Isanka Ediriweera and her husband Umesh—Minnesota

Lakmini Widanapathirana and her husband Achila—Ames, Iowa

Sujatha Werake and her husband Mahinda —Seattle, Washington

Sumudu Leelananda—Ames, Iowa

A refreshing salad to start off the summer

Deli Chickpea Salad

Ingredients:

2 sweet red peppers
3 tbsp (50 ml) balsamic or wine vinegar
2 tbsp (25 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
2 tsp (10 ml) dijon mustard 1/4 tsp (1 ml)
Pepper Pinch
Salt
2 cans (each 19 oz/540 ml) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
2 oz (60 g) sliced hot or mild salami, cut in strips
1/2 cup (125 mL) black oil-cured olives, pitted and chopped
1/2 cup (125 mL) thinly sliced red onion
2 carrots, shredded
1/4 cup (50 mL) chopped fresh parsley
2 tbsp (25 mL) chopped fresh oregano
4 lettuce leaves

Preparation:

Cut red peppers in half lengthwise. Place, cut side down, on foil-lined baking sheet; broil until blistered, 15 minutes. Let stand until cool enough to handle. Peel off blackened skin; seed and cut into strips.

In large bowl, whisk together vinegar, olive oil, mustard, pepper and salt. Add red peppers, chickpeas, salami, olives, onion, carrots, parsley and oregano; toss to coat. Serve on lettuce-lined plates. (Servings: 4)

~Source: <http://www.canadianliving.com>



How to stay connected...

Do you have a recipe, vacation spot, joke or an old memory from Mahamaya that you wish to share with MGCAANA members? We would love to hear from you, please write to us at :

mahamaya_alumnae@yahoo.com

To see more pictures from the 5th AGM join :

- MGCAANA's Yahoo Group: **Mahamayafriends**
(Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com> and search for "mahamayafriends", then click on "Join Group")
- MGCAANA's Facebook Page: **"MGCAANA"**



~ Pictures from Google Images

The Road Not Taken

~ Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;
Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,
And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

An Appreciation...

One of our dear members, Pushpalatha Gunasekera of Los Angeles, lost her husband Dr. H.M. Gunasekera on June 4th after a brief illness. He was visiting Sri Lanka at the time. Dr. Gunasekera was an economist who earned his B.A. Hons. from University of Ceylon, Peradeniya in 1963, M.A. from Yale in 1967 and Ph.D. from UCLA in 1973. He taught economics at the University of Peradeniya, and University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji Islands. Then he worked under the United Nations Development Program as Chief Technical Advisor in Development Planning in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. He co-authored "Aarthika Vishleshanaya," a textbook with Prof W. D. Lakshman on principles of Economics in Sinhala, designed for undergraduates. It became one of the widely used textbooks in Economics in Sri Lanka. He also translated John Maynard Keynes' classic "A treatise on Money, Income and Interest" into Sinhala. Last years of his life he showed more interest in Buddhism. He translated one of Rev. Boralande Subodha Meheni's books from Sinhala into English, the title being "A Practical Guide for Insight Meditation Towards Arahantship" which he sent us as a gift.

About two years ago, Dr. Gunasekera was invited to one of MGCAANA Endowment Committee's initial teleconferences to get some insight and advice on how to set up an endowment. Our Committee members got the opportunity to listen to him. He was very supportive of our MGCAANA programs. He always had good things to say about them whenever we met. He was a warm and simple person. He earned the admiration and respect of his friends, colleagues, and students both in Sri Lanka and abroad. My husband and I have known the Gunasekeras for over 40 years. His untimely death is a great loss to all who knew him. He is survived by his wife Pushpa, and children Janaki, Rahula and Varuna.

May he attain Nibbana!

~ Sujatha Werake



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Editorial Committee- Priyanka Jayakody, Nazrana Caffoor, Dakshika Bandaranayake, Pamuditha Mahadiulwewa