

Newsletter



EDITORIAL

Visakha celebrated ninety years in 2007. Reading this relatively short but crowded history of our school as documented in the Visakha souvenirs, is an emotional journey that makes one prouder than ever to be a Visakhian. Her beginnings, the exciting milestones, the larger than life personalities that adorned her staff, the endless list of students who stole the limelight in every field imaginable (and still do) are truly 'must read' material.

The VVOGA can proudly claim to have been an important player in Visakha's rise to fame and the custodian of her name. We have however now come to an important point in OUR history, the history of the OGA. The execution of our responsibilities, the fulfilment of the numerous obligations and services to our school are becoming more and more difficult, due to the lack of finances.

Fund raising has become more and more onerous. The prevailing security situation this year has compelled us to cancel the annual 'Avurudu Pola' which has up to now been the main fund raiser for the OGA. Enrolling volunteers for projects has also not been easy.

We are however confident that a membership exceeding 6,000 will surely rally round and help in the many projects that are being organized, thus ensuring a vibrant fellowship among the Old Girls and a supportive strength to our school.

Priya de Silva and Sarala Kodagoda

FEATURE

The English medium of study at Visakha

It is universally accepted that an education in the English medium is a passport to a wealth of opportunities. It may have been the lack of this that in the past saw many students transferring at Grades 8 or 11, to schools which provided this facility.

In 2001, Visakha responded to this challenge and began an English stream for Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics limited to the A' Level classes. In 2003, this facility was enlarged to include classes from Grade 6 to Grade 11. The disciplines thus available are Social Studies, Mathematics, Science & Technology and Health Studies.

The task of implementing a complete English stream in the school is not an easy one, given the scarcity of trained teachers in the English medium and the need for educational material such as textbooks and teaching aids.

The OGA has accepted this responsibility and as an initial step financed the training of some members of the staff in teaching Chemistry in English conducted by the University of Colombo.

It is our hope to finance the engagement of competent staff to teach as many of the subjects as are available, up to the O 'Level & A 'Level of the English stream at Visakha.

The first batch of students to sit the O 'Level exam in the English medium was in December 2007, and the results just out are extremely good.

In order to realise our goal of developing the English stream at Visakha, the OGA is to organize the second Visakha Dinner Dance in June, this year.

It is hoped that our members would whole heartedly support this fund raising project, thus ensuring Visakha provides quality education in English whilst continuing to uphold the traditions and customs that define our school.

Indira Malwatte & Priya de Silva

NEWS & APPRECIATION

Miss Chandra de Zoysa



Miss Chandra de Zoysa, a name synonymous with Visakha Vidyalaya is no more. She passed away on the 11 February 2008 after a brief illness. She was the longest serving Deputy Principal of Visakha, having

held that post for 32 of the 35 years she served on our staff.

Miss de Zoysa strode the corridors of Visakha like a Colossus, instilling discipline, decorum and decent values both by example and by precept. Always impeccably dressed, her sonorous voice commanded immediate attention. Her duties as Deputy Principal were multifarious. To all her efforts she put in her whole heart, and therein lay her success. She stood 'shoulder to shoulder' with Mrs Pulimood, our indomitable Principal to fashion the 'Golden Epoch' of Visakha Vidyalaya.

She was totally behind Mrs Pulimood in organizing all the fantastic 'Visakha Jayantis' and with her two best buddies Mrs Dilsiri de Silva and Miss Daisy Karawita dubbed by us as the 'Maha thun denna', she spearheaded the many extra curricular activities be it operas or Shakespearean theatre.

Geography was her forte' and she excelled as a teacher. Her lessons were meticulously planned and perfectly executed.

Her gracious generosity towards Visakha and 'her girls', as she called us, was legendary. Miss de Zoysa was a traditionalist standing steadfast to time tested values, yet had her mind open to the changing world. She was never averse to accept and appreciate modern trends as expressed in her fashionable clothes and accessories.

She had unflinching faith in Visakhians and believed we were the 'cream of society'. She made us believe in our selves and drew forth the best in us. May we all strive to live up to her ideals and expectations!

Srini Karunaratna nee Gunaratna

Soiree - An Evening of Fun

An OGA members only event, this boasts of a programme which includes a Gourmet Tea demonstration courtesy of Dilmah Teas, a Fashion Show, a Contemporary Dance display, a Sing-a-long led by the Visakha alumnae choir, a DJ in attendance, Trade Stalls, refreshments and of course Visakhian fellowship.

It will start off with a felicitation to a beloved personality, namely Miss Daisy Karawita who will be celebrating her 80th birthday this year.

Date – Saturday, 10 May 2008

Venue – Jeremias Dias Hall

Time – 2 pm to 7.30 pm

Tickets – Rs 500/ each (available with Batch Representatives. & from the OGA Secretariat)

Hire of Trade Stalls – 1,500/ each

*Inquiries: Eranthi Premaratna
0773572056, eranthip@masholdings.com*

*Inquiries for Trade Stalls - Dharshana
0772944379 & Sajeewani 0777989701*

Wesak Project

A donation would be made towards the purchase of drugs for the inmates of the Cancer Hospital, Maharagama with the concurrence of Dr Kanishka Karunaratne Director of the Hospital. Contributions in cash or by cheque drawn in favour of the VVOGA could be sent to the Secretariat before 15 May.

Inquiries: Buddhika Godakanda 2509880

Visakha Dinner Dance 2008

Following on the resounding success of the inaugural event in 2006, this event is being organized to collect funds for the development of the English medium of study at Visakha

Date – Friday 13 June 2008

Venue – Cinnamon Grand, Colombo

Bands – Misty & Sohan & the X' periments

Support needed for sponsorship, souvenir advertisements & donations

Inquiries: Jeevanie Pandithage 2767121/Priya de Silva 2856268

VVOGA AGM

Date: Saturday 05 July 2008

Reunion Lunch (following the AGM)

Venue: - The Bougainvillea Block

Inquiries: Sabitha Gunatilleka 2761471

Esala Sil Programme

Date: 17th July 2008

Inquiries: Buddhika Godakanda 0773670051

Vishaka Samaraweera: 2871146/0777923679

EVENTS & PICTORIALS

Members' Day

Organized by the members of the Social Activities sub committee, this was held on 18 November 2007 at the Jeremias Dias Hall.

The program began with a presentation on Reproductive Health by Dr Priya de Silva on Pre & Post Menopausal Health issues, Safe Motherhood and early detection of cancer. The many questions that followed reflected the importance of these issues to women.

Next was a microwave cookery demonstration by Sujeewa Withana of Singer Sri Lanka, using luscious strawberries courtesy of Jagro. The auction of the delectable dishes brought in some cash to our coffers as did the raffles held during the event.

Finally Hasini Gunasekera made a presentation on 'Good Grooming' which included a demonstration of a 'quickie' hairstyle and of sari draping.

Boot sale

Held on 1 December 2007, the Boot Sale took on a carnival air albeit on a small scale. Lines of cars with their boots open promenaded their ware. Organized as a small fund raiser it brought in a whopping 83,000/-. We take this opportunity of congratulating the Fund raising subcommittee and offering them good wishes for the forthcoming major event, the Visakha Dinner Dance 2008.

'Bodhi Pooja'

A Bodhi Pooja organized by the Religious subcommittee was held on 16 January 2008 to mark 91 years of the founding of our school. This was attended by Past Visakhians and members of the staff.

OGA Table Cloth Signature Project

This table cloth with embroidered signatures in gold, of old girls is an heirloom displayed on special occasions of Visakha.

It was the 'Brain child' of Mrs Lucille Amarasuriya on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the school. It shows much wear and tear but with much repair made to it, the OGA had been adding new signatures at different milestones of the school. Sixteen signatures were added to commemorate the 90th anniversary last year.

New aspirants need not however wait for the centenary celebrations in 2017 as a few more could be accommodated up to the 30th of April. A specimen of your signature along with your name, address and Life membership number together with a cheque for 3,000/- drawn in favour of the VVOGA could be sent to the OGA secretariat.



OGA Executive Committee 2007/ 2008

Seated from L - Yasintha, Samiddhi, Sharmali, Mrs R Gunaratna (Principal), Indira, Eranthi, Piroshini & Priya

2nd Row standing from L - Tharindra, Jeevanie, Prashani, Ramani, Renuka, Pushpika, Eranthee, Samanmali, Amodini, Dayani, Dushyanthi & Nadeesha

3rd Row standing from L - Ishani, Buddhika, Manoja, Manouri, Sabitha, Himali, Geethanjali & Vishaka

Absent - Anushi, Sarala, Sunanda & Sepali



Members' Day 18 November 2007



Boot Sale 1 December 2007

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Support from our Overseas Branches Melbourne Branch

A donation of Rs 100,000 was donated and credited to the Health Project under the care of the OGA.

Visakha Alumnae Association of Southern California (VAASOCAL)

This fledgling Branch Association donated US \$ 1000 towards the development of the English medium of study at Visakha and another US \$ 1000 towards the renovations of the school hostel.

The donation was made possible through the profits made from Pahan Silu 2007, the inaugural Dinner Dance organised by VAASOCAL

The VVOGA extends sincere gratitude to both Associations for their generosity and wish them the very best for their future.

Calendar of Events for 2008

10 th May	Soiree - An Evening of Fun
May	Wesak Project
13 th June	Visakha Dinner Dance 2008, at the Cinnamon Grand, Colombo
05 th July	AGM of the VVOGA & Reunion Lunch at the Bougainvillea Block
17 th July	Esala Sil program
23 rd July	17th Susan George Pulimood Oration by Dr Dhanapali Kottahachchi at the Jeremias Dias Hall at 5.15 pm

A Venue for get-togethers

As you all know the Cafeteria housed in the Bougainvillea block is managed by the OGA. This well appointed venue is available for social gatherings of the old girls at a reasonable charge of 1,600/ per event. Catering for these events could be undertaken by the cafeteria staff or by an outside source.

Inquiries – Ramani Gomes 2573251 or Sharmali Kodagoda 2712817

Need for Volunteers

Volunteers are urgently needed in the following areas;

- Cafeteria – Week days from 9.30–1.30 pm
Inquiries; Ramani Gomes 2573251
- OGA Secretariat: Week days from 7.30 am – 1.30pm to operate the photocopy machine.
Inquiries; Priya de Silva 2856268

Achievements of Visakhians

We congratulate **Mrs Kshanika Hiriburugama** nee Sannasgala, a distinguished old girl, on her appointment as the Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo. We extend to her our very best wishes for her tenure of office.

The OGA also salutes the achievements of Visakhians at the examinations held in 2007. They are **Tharani Gamage** for securing first place in the Commerce stream at the A ' Levels & **Amali Upekhsa Jayasinghe** and **Janisha Iyumi Liyanagunawardena** for securing first and second best results respectively at the GCE O' Level exam in the Sinhala stream, held in December 2007. They have done Visakha proud and we wish them the very best in their future endeavours.