



Newsletter

Visakha Vidyalaya Old Girls' Association

133, Vajira Road, Colombo 05. www.visakhav.org

January 2014

Wish you Happiness, Good Health & Joy in 2014!

Hello everyone!

A most eventful 2013 has just come to an end and we are just on the threshold of 2014 which is already showing promise of being another busy and a wonderful year for all of us. Our fervent wish for all of you is that you would find the newly dawned year bringing you lots of happiness and good health.

The new Executive Committee of the OGA, appointed at the AGM held in June 2013, is already hard at work organizing many eventful days that are the stalwarts of our annual school events calendar. Except a few senior members, a lot of new members have come together to form the committee. While working hard as usual to give maximum support to keep the name of VISAKHA at the top, we have also not forgotten to have fun too!!



1st Row seated from Left to Right,

Ms. Sharmini De Almeida, Ms. Srimathi Jayasuriya, Ms. Deepthi Ranasinghe, Ms. Anoma Perera, Ms. Chandima Karunatilake, Mrs. Sandamali Aviruppola, Ms. Shanta Gunaratna, Ms. Kanchana Suduarachchi, Ms. Sita Siriwardena, Ms. Renuka Dharmadasa, Ms. Buddhini Medawatta

Standing from L to R

Ms. Disna Sajeewani, Ms. Achintha Jayawardena, Ms. Sarani Bandara, Ms. Upekha Liyanage, Ms. Imojani Marasinghe, Ms. Kalhari Samarasinghe, Ms. Prasangi Dayaratne, Ms. Chami Edirisinghe, Ms. Piumika Karunanayake,

Ms. Kaushalya Jayasekara, Ms. Lili Kariyawasam, Ms. Sabitha Gunatillake, Ms. Anuruddha Galappatti, Ms. Wasana Sudarshi Kumari Bandara, Ms. Anjalie P GardiPunchihewa, Ms. Banukie Nirosha Jayasuriya, Ms. Harshi Gunawardena, Ms. Deepika Hathurusinghe, Ms. Rashmin Dilna Jayathilake, Ms. Ramanee Wijesekara

2nd Row L to R

Ms. Angai Wijemanne, Ms. Manoja Shiromi Peiris, Ms. Manilka Brahmana, Ms. Ayodya Ranasinghe, Ms. Dushyanthi Botejue

EDITORIAL



Success of any organization is its members' participation at the events organized. In this vein, the events for 2014 organized by the OGA are many and are done with the motive of raising much needed funds for various projects that the OGA has undertaken. Your presence and support at these events would hearten the organizers and also help make each of these a success. Don't forget that these events are also times that all of us - young and the old and the not-so-young - get the chance to meet, greet and share nostalgic memories. Oh! Those glorious school days!! An e-mail recently viewed said that it is important to

keep in touch with the sisters in our lives - our mothers, daughters, biological sisters, school friends, female relatives, work friends and many other females we meet in life - for as we grow older, it is the friendship of these sisters that would sustain us to face life positively with a smile, for they would always walk beside you when others have left you to walk alone.

So, past, present and future Visakhians, let's make sure that we keep up our own sisterhood alive and kicking for years to come!!!

- Anagi & Chami

V.V.O.G.A EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE – 2013/2014

President	Mrs. Sandamali Aviruppola	Above 30 & below 40 years	Ms. Achintha Jayawardena
Vice-Presidents	Ms. Shanta Gunaratna		Ms. Manilka Brahmana
	Ms. Chandima Karunatillake		Ms. Sarani Bandara
Joint Secretaries	Ms. Anoma Perera		Ms. Wasana Sudarshi Kumari Bandara
	Ms. Kanchana Suduarachchi		Ms. Disna Sajeewani
Treasurer	Ms. Deepthi Ranasinghe		Ms. A. P Gardi Punchihewa
Assistant Treasurer	Ms. Manori Sooriyabandara		Ms. Imojani Marasinghe
Staff Member	Ms. Buddhini Medawatta		Ms. Ayodya Ranasinghe
60 years and above	Ms. Sita Siriwardena		Ms. Upekha Liyanage
	Ms. Srimathi Jayasuriya		Ms. Prasangi Dayaratne
Above 40 & below 60 years	Ms. Angai Wijemanne		Ms. Manoja Shiromi Peiris
	Ms. Anuruddha Galappatti		Ms. Kaushalya Jayasekara
	Ms. Deepika Hathurusinghe		Ms. B. Nirosha Jayasuriya
	Ms. Dushyanthi Botejue		Ms. Kalhari Samarasinghe
	Ms. Harshi Gunawardena	30 Years and below	Ms. Chami Edirisinghe
	Ms. Ramanee Wijesekara		Ms. Piyumika Karunaratne
	Ms. R. Dilna Jayathilake		Ms. Lili Kariyawasam
	Ms. Renuka Dharmadasa		
	Ms. Sabitha Gunatillake		
	Mc Shamini de Almeida		

VVOGA IS 80 YEARS OLD!!!



The coming year will mark the 80th year of the VVOGA. The inaugural meeting of the Association was held on the 23rd of June 1934 in the old school hall with Mrs. Clara Motwani, the then Principal in the chair. The Vice President was Mrs. Regina de Silva and the Secretary was Mrs. Pearl Weerasinghe. It's heartening to note that over the years the membership has increased and today it stands at more than 6000.

After leaving school, I joined the Association in 1959 and as I recall the life membership fee was only Rs.25/= then. When I joined the tutorial staff in 1962, I was requested to join the executive committee. Most of the committee members were very senior members who were over 50 years of age. Two years later I functioned as one of the Secretaries along with Mrs. Hewavisanti who guided and trained me to handle the responsibilities involved. Of course the work load was very much less than today. There were no Sub-Committees at that time. Most of the events were organized for fellowship unlike today where fund raising has become the main objective of a significant number of events.

Since its inception, the VVOGA has worked closely with the Principals and the school to provide quality education to Visakhians. Girls both young and old have rallied round to raise much needed funds for the various development projects of the school. The committee members have always worked tirelessly to ensure the success of every event undertaken by the OGA.

The OGA also offers the past Visakhians an opportunity to meet their colleagues from school, their teachers and to continue the bond with their Alma Mater. The old girls are deeply appreciative of what they have received from Visakha and wish to give in return at least their time and energy to uplift the school for the future generations.

It is with deep pride that the OGA counts among her distinguished alumni physicians, surgeons, lawyers, engineers, scientists, architects, accountants, artists, authors, musicians, film makers, etc. There is a good reason for being proud of our achievements and the progress made over the years. While the older members stay on, and remain active, the increasing number of young ones joining in, bubbling with energy, assures the Association of its continuity.

Some of the old girls aspire to have their daughters admitted to Visakha and join the Association mainly with that intention. Regrettably, they believe that the Association's main role is helping the members to admit their children to the school. The benefits derived from being part of this Association is truly much more. The sense of camaraderie, making new friends with the young and old, to share the joys and sorrows of other members and the sheer fun of getting together are no doubt much more rewarding. Further, it enables us to continue to make a positive contribution to present Visakhians.

Visakha has moulded and instilled in us a deep sense of love and loyalty to our Alma Mater and this is a reflection of Visakha's worth as an educational institution.

Mrs Sita Siriwardana

UPCOMING EVENTS 2014

Keep the Dates Free

- 18th January - Children's Day celebrations (9.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.)
- 16th January - Annual Bodhi Pooja
- 25th, 26th March - Founder's Day pirith and alms giving
- 29th March - Avurudu Pola
- 11th May - Performance by Kishani Jayasinghe
- 23rd July - Pulimood Oration

EVENTS FROM 2013



*A year is a lot of days, each with some special moments in it.
Let's walk through the memory lane*



LIST OF CONVENORS & CORRESPONDING SUB COMMITTEES

Srimathi Jayasuriya (Hall Renovation Project)	srinathivl@gmail.com
Deepika Hathurusinghe (Convenor-Secretariat)	dipikahathurusinghe@gmail.com
Dushyanthi Botejue (Correspondence)	dushyanthib@gmail.com
Harshi Gunawardene (Equipments)	harshig@yahoo.com
Achintha Jayawardene (Social Services)	achinthaj@srilankainsurance.com
Manilka Brahmana (Religious Activities)	manika808@yahoo.com
Sarani Bandara (Fund Raising)	sarani_bandara@combank.com
Imojani Marasinghe (Education)	imojani58@yahoo.com
Ayodhya Ranasinghe (Medical)	ayodyarodrigo@yahoo.com
Prasangi Dayarathne (Website/Foreign Bursary)	prasnii@gmail.com
Manoja Shiromi Peiris (Archives)	manoja.peiris@yahoo.com
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Banukie Jayasooriya (Membership)	banukienirosha@gmail.com
Anagi Wijemanne (Newsletter)	lakminiw31@hotmail.com

MAIN EVENT OF 2013 – “KISHANI SINGS FOR VISAKHA”

CELEBRATING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE VVOGA



Kishani Jayasinghe Head Prefect of our School in 1996, is now an internationally acclaimed Opera singer. A versatile student Kishani had an illustrious career at Visakha.

She captained the tennis team, debating team, was the leader of the school choir, President of the UN association, and, was the National Women's Rowing Champion for three consecutive years. She studied music with Mary Ann David winning many coveted awards. However she chose the legal profession and while studying for her LLM at the Nottingham University, she was spotted by a Director of London Guildhall, School of Music in 2001.

Kishani decided to pursue a career in music at the Royal Academy of Music after completing her LLM degree. She made her debut at the the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in 2006, Kishani was invited to sing at Buckingham Palace at Prince Charles' 60th birthday celebrations. She was the only Asian singer at this event. Kishani's special talents were recognized when she was adjudged the winner at several International Vocal Competitions held in Europe.

We are delighted to present 'Kishani sings for Visakha' on 11th May 2014, at the Lionel Wendt theatre at 7:00 pm.

We request Visakhians to join us at this very special concert, to convey our appreciation to a very talented and versatile singer who has brought fame and glory to our country and our Alma Mater.

Tickets will be available for sale in March at the Avurudu Pola. Proceeds will be utilized to fund a new building for the aesthetic section.

Contact persons: Sarani 0772683869
Lily 0777781712

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- It has been made compulsory for the Old Girls to produce their OGA membership card at the gate when entering the school. If you do not have the card, please hurry up and get your card. Contact Banukie for details. An "Attendance Register" is maintained at the gate for the OGA members who have volunteered to work at various action stations within the school.
 - Volunteers are needed very much to teach at the Dhamma School. Past finalists of Sunday school are preferred. Please contact the Convener of Religious Activities.
 - Education Sub Committee very much needs sponsors to help keep their projects going. If you are interested, please contact the Convener of the Education Sub Committee.
 - Volunteers are also needed to maintain the photocopy machine, the OGA Secretariat and the Cafeteria.
 - Sponsors are also needed for the new Aesthetic Building to be erected in the school premises. Also, the main School Hall Renovation project which has costed Rs. 40 Million so far, is also in need of more funds for the Phase 11, which involves the Roof. If you can help, please contact Srimathi.
 - A volunteer teacher of English is needed to help out in the English speech/spoken programme for the hostellers. It would be an on-going programme and the classes are held once a week. If interested, please contact Anagi
 - An old girl is required to be employed for the Cafeteria to work full time
- A list of all the Conveners' names and contact details are given in this newsletter for your convenience. Please refer to it when you need to make contact with the relevant OGA member in charge.)

OUR CONGRATULATIONS



There was much to be thankful and proud about in the year past. Our Visakhians have always been achievers. But the year 2013 saw an achievement to cap it all. In the Shakespeare Drama Festival held annually among the

schools, we emerged the winners of Girls Schools after many many years. Proving that Visakhians are of many talents, we have emerged winners in Chess, Squash, Water Polo and many others.

From the Photo Album of winning moments ...



Emerged winners of the girls' round of the Shakespeare Drama competition



Emerged girls' squash champs



Visakhians shine at Indian Competition



'Visakha chess champs Under 15



'Chess Champs Runners-up Under 19

A TRIBUTE TO MS.DAISY KARAWITA



Daisy Karawita who passed away in her sleep in late August, was one of my oldest and closest friends from our university days in the nineteen forties. She was one year my junior but as we both resided in the same hostel we became close friends.

She entered the university from Sri Sumangala Girls School Panadura, but she had her secondary education at Musaeus. Daisy was a Denham scholar. This scholarship named in honor of a director of education was awarded to outstanding students in local government schools, to enable them to pursue their education in the English medium, the village schools being mainly vernacular schools.

Immediately after graduating she joined the staff of Visakha Vidyalaya as a teacher of Sinhala in the upper classes. She was at Visakha for 36 years, acting for the Principal for a short period. She was an excellent teacher, very firm but kind and understanding.

Daisy Karawita was a happy and jovial person who never let her physical disability to depress her. If she was depressed she never showed it.

Daisy was a born versifier. Sinhala Kavi and couplets of song

came to her spontaneously. She would cap an argument with succinct verse.

The Pulimood Commemoration song sung at the commencement of the annual Pulimood oration was composed by Daisy Karawita. Many of the recent old girls do not know this.

The Visakha Geethanataka is Miss Karawita's outstanding contribution to Visakha. It was her idea to stage a play based on the life story of Visakha Situ Devi, the chief among the women lay disciples of Buddha. She wanted an operetta which was then in vogue following the success of Sarachchandra's Maname and Singha Bahu. With Mrs Pulimood's approval she requested Sri Chandraratna Manavasinghe, the reputed composer of the day, to write a Geetanataka recounting the story of Visakha. Manavasinghe's composition was set to music by Edwin Samaradiwakara and the Geetanataka was first staged in 1957 and subsequently during the Swarna Jayanthi celebrations and to mark other anniversaries.

When the Geethanataka was staged in 2007 Miss Karawita was the Chief guest at one of the performances.

Ms Sumana Saparamadu

23RD. SUSAN GEORGE PULIMOOD MEMORIAL ORATION 2013



The Annual Susan George Memorial Oration of Visakha Vidyalaya, was held this year on the 23rd. July at 5.15 p.m. in the Jeremias Dias Hall of the school. This year, the Oration was delivered by Mrs. Kamalini De Silva, Secretary, Ministry of Justice, Chairman of the National Task Force for the prevention of Trafficking in Persons.

HALL RENOVATIONS

A massive project undertaken by WOGA Phase 1 is almost completed!

The Jeremias Dias Hall built almost 30 years ago was in a very bad state, and needed urgent repairs. We commenced refurbishment and renovations last year and the Hall has got the much needed upliftment it required. We had to keep in mind the original architecture of the hall and preserve same, whilst considering the cost factor when sourcing for material and labour, whilst not compromising on quality as well, during this project. Work is going on in earnest trying to bring this mammoth project to a completion.

Your help in making a success of various OGA Fund-raising projects is much needed in this context.



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