



S. Thomas' College Gurutalawa

Old Boys' Association

02nd December 2008

Dear Member,

50TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON SUNDAY 01 MARCH 2009 AND AN URGENT APPEAL FOR FUNDS FOR A NEEDY PROJECT

50th Annual General Meeting and the Current Status:

Our Annual General Meeting next year, fixed for March 1, 2009, Sunday at 9.30 am, at Gurutalawa, will be the 50th AGM, (excluding the Inaugural Meeting on the February 21, 1959).

In this our Golden Jubilee Meeting next year, we expect as many of you to grace the occasion and give your unstinted support to the College and the Headmaster, Rev. Marc Billimoria. This has been fixed for Sunday in order that those who attended the Inaugural Meeting and those of the first few years, and who contributed immensely to the OBA in many ways in those early years, can comfortably travel the previous day and attend the meeting on Sunday, after a Service at the College Chapel.

Due to varied reasons, some beyond everyone's control like socio political changes, and shifts in attitudes of parents, like those towards boarding schools and the inevitable march of time with money taking pride of place necessitating one of the parents to go abroad resulting in single parenting virtually, STC Gurutalawa had changed from the original boarding school to a different institution over these past many years, to cater to a different type of student. As much as some of the deterioration of our beloved 'Guru' was due to the inaction of many who could have stemmed the tide in time, we hope the Old Boys can rally round to give a helping hand in a bid to resuscitate the institution.

At last we have a dedicated Headmaster, a Thomian, after so many outsiders as it were, and who has not stinted in his efforts to bring the institution back to a level that we can again be proud to call it our Alma Mater. The House Master system, with boys allocated to Houses as in the past and in a single dormitory, is one of the many changes affected, that has brought about a higher level of discipline. He has regular meetings weekly with the Prefects in his bungalow. He visits the dormitories and knows the students individually. The fact that he is resident in the premises during the holidays is another reason that has brought about a sense of continuity throughout, as earlier even security was non-existent during certain holiday times, while one previous Headmaster was not in residence even during weekends.

Patron: Dr. David Ponniah (Warden STC Mt. Lavinia), President: Rev. Marc Billimoria (Headmaster STC Gurutalawa) Tel: 057 2245202
Snr. Vice President: Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe 155/35, Dolalanda Gardens Thalawathugoda. Tel: 077 3865276
Secretary: Mr. Dinusha P De Costa 23/38, Dewala Road, Depanama, Pannipitiya. Tel: 077 3312131
Treasurer: Mr. P. Dhayabaran S 4 CG 02, Chithra Lane H/S, Narahenpita, Colombo 5. Tel: 077 7775443

In as much as this is our Golden Anniversary, it is also a God-given Golden Opportunity to join hands together and contribute whatever we can to improve the College, of course knowing full well that we can never bring it to standards of those glorious years when it was indeed the best among its peers. We have a very receptive Headmaster, who has spared no pains, for the upliftment of the College, including the physical, when he got back to school on Saturday, November 29, 2008, within a week of a surgical operation, to attend to his onerous workload. There have been many changes in the academic staff and the Headmaster has motivated all staff to deliver the optimum.

In these challenging times, we have a united Old Boys Association, all eagerness to work together, for the school's development.

The student body in school is just sufficient to barely make financial ends meet, and still more needs be done, but financial constraints hold everything back. The recently appointed new Manager, Lincoln Fernando, an Old Boy of STC Mt. Lavinia is keenly involved in the affairs at the school, with regular visits to Guru and continuing the good work of the former Manager, Mr. Christo Gonawela. He has obtained the services of the Accountant at STC Mount Lavinia, to systemize and revamp the accounting and to travel monthly to ensure compliance. By January 2009, the accounts are expected to be fully in order with general expenses apportioned to different cost centres, so that any deficiencies in any area can be pinpointed for improvement.

Already much improvement in infrastructure has been effected, from time to time as and when money was made available such as Keble boys' night toilets courtesy of the OTAUK, Blanchard girls dorm toilet wing courtesy of Ladies College, the senior dorm night toilets courtesy of the OTA Australia (Melbourne), new staff room toilets and Middle & Upper School students toilets courtesy of Brandix, water system courtesy of the Bishop of Colombo etc.

Replacement of Read Junior Dormitory Roof and Reconstruction of Junior Dormitory Toilets:

In this backdrop, the OBA was requested to look into the possibility of redoing the sixty year old asbestos roof of the Read Junior dormitory, which had caved in, entailing the treatment of the asbestos sheets to conform to the new health standards in the use of asbestos products, after the requisite repairs. If the condition is found to be bad, Zinc/Aluminum sheets may have to be used. The bathrooms and toilets adjoining this dormitory, for use of all juniors, was a matter of comment by all visitors from abroad and Old Boys here. The OBA therefore decided to undertake the refurbishment of the dormitory roof and completely reconstruct the toilets as they were unusable, as a project for the Anniversary Year. The OBA had totally refurbished the night toilets of the Junior dorms early this year, expending Rs.177,825. The architectural drawings of the toilet/washroom building, along with the Read Junior Dormitory requiring the replacement of the roof, are attached.

We appreciate the commitment of the STC NSW OBA of A\$2000 towards a special project of its own and we separated 6 Nos. wash rooms for the swimming pool for this purpose on the basis of the Exchange Rate then. The wash rooms are now incorporated in the toilet building, with the number reduced to 4, for aesthetic and cost cutting purposes in the reduction of the Exchange Rate. We trust that these funds will be remitted to this worthy cause.

A very generous Old Boy from Australia, Edourd Rowlands, had made a contribution of Rs.348,250.- towards the toilets project. The OBA made Rs.150,000.- profit from the Fellowship Dinner in October and we have about another Rs.250,000.- from our past collections from regular contributors, making a total of Rs.750,000 available. Some donors have in the past said that they are willing to contribute for specific projects and have pledged about another Rs.250,000.- which we hope will be forthcoming soon. Mr. Kamal Nilaweera has offered Rs.25,000. - for this project when he called from UK and it is expected in the OBA account shortly. We hope our other Old Boys from overseas will rise to the occasion and send us their contributions. In order to save Bank Charges at both ends, if two or three can combine and remit, there will be a benefit at both ends.

Accordingly, we have an accumulated fund to date as follows:

Ed. Rowlands	Rs. 348,500
OBA	Rs. 400,000
Commitments	Rs. 250,000
Mr. Nilaweera	Rs. 25,000

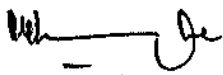
Total	<u>Rs.1,023,500</u>

The estimated cost of the project is Rs.2.0 million and the work will be carried out under the aegis of the OBA with Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe, the Senior Vice President with Mr. Krishantha Weerawardane and Mr. Srilal Wickremaratne, overseeing all construction, with regular visits from Colombo. A full time supervisor will also be employed. Further, the work has to be completed within a month, during the school holidays, commencing December 6th, in order to avoid inconvenience to students.

We therefore request all Old Boys to render whatever assistance by contributing to the shortfall of Rs.976,500.- as early as possible, so that this will be our contribution to our old school in the fiftieth year of the OBA.

The Account details of our Bank are; Account No:1930010988 Commercial Bank Mt. Lavinia (For foreign remittances – sort/swift code: CCEYLKLX) credit STC Gurutalawa OBA account.

ESTO PERPETUA



Mahen Ranasinghe
Senior Vice President