

FELLOWSHIP DINNER

NEWS LETTER-02

This evening will bring back memories of the carefree days spent at Guru. As you reminisce and indulge in nostalgia you will always pay respect to and remember with gratitude your Alma Mater and our Teachers **FOR ALL THAT WE HAVE AND ARE**. Perhaps it may now be opportune for us to ask ourselves what have we done for College and what we can do, in return.

The birth of our Group could be traced to the Pavilion and Sports Complex Project contemplated in 1993. It was the brain child of Sarath Suraweera, that gentle Policeman. As Head Prefect of S. Thomas Preparatory School Bandarawela and College Prefect at Gurutalawa, he had outstanding leadership qualities and was able to gather around him a band of enthusiastic Old Boys. Although the envisaged Project did not materialize the membership of the Group has enlarged and the yearning to assist College remained. The balance out of the Funds collected for the original Project has and is being utilized for various Sports promotion activities connected with the original concept. What is distressing to note however is that the use by the College of the grounds (which we considered as an essential part of our lives at Guru where we learnt to play the game) has unfortunately today been reduced to more or less on a part time basis and with the leave and license of others in the area. These are to our minds unacceptable conditions. This would not have been the case had our Project been completed.

During the latter part of the '90's various parties at Guru prevailed upon Sarath Suraweera to take a greater interest in what was happening in College throughout the year instead of confining his visits with other Old Boys for the AGM in February.

It was also found that the proceedings at the AGM year after year, were not conducted in an acceptable manner and after the Meeting of February 2001 a sustained effort was made at gently persuading the Executive Committee to change certain practices and permit the larger Membership to participate fully in all activities of the OBA as well as to take a greater interest in activities at College which should be the first and primary concern .We regret to say our efforts have not been successful. To say that we have been rebuffed, would be an understatement.

In this situation we have had no alternative but on our own to do what we can for College, which, as every body is aware is in desperate need of our help. We therefore decided to rally round College and gather around us in all our efforts and activities particularly Old Boys of the 1958-62 era and those older and

younger to us who are keen to join. We were encouraged to do so because of the avalanche of protests that were placed before us concerning the lethargy, ineffectiveness and non-action by the Organised body.

Our Group consists of Members of the OBA as well as non -Members. We make every effort to have non- Members join the OBA and participate in all its activities as we do, to make them successful. Those that do not wish to join the OBA for a variety of reasons can still help College and do so through our activities for which priority is given. Our Members have made known to the Authorities that they are prepared to visit College regularly and involve themselves in any task assigned by the Administration.

Therefore our main objectives would be to help College whilst promoting fellowship, closer co-operation and unity among all our members.

The Office Bearers will hold Office for ***only one year***, and thereafter form an Executive Committee. The out going President will nominate the successor. It is envisaged that only those who have the time and energy to contribute towards our objectives will head the Group as much commitment is demanded. A Thomian code of conduct instilled in us by our Founder Head Master and other respected Teachers and the lessons learned at Guru will guide us in our future activities. All constructive criticism, useful ideas for our improvement and for the benefit of College would be welcome. The voices of all Members will be heard. Nobody will be treated as an interloper. Valuable ideas will be accepted and sought to be implemented. All will be made to feel Partners in the mission.

We have already achieved a great deal. Consequent to numerous requests from various interested sources to take a greater interest in the activities in Guru we embarked on a fact finding mission. Some of our Members took lodging in Bandarawela and executed as complete an investigation as was possible inspecting the Campus at Guru and interviewing the Ex- Head Master, the present Head Master, and where necessary, with their permission, the Members of the Tutorial Staff , Administrative Staff, Minor Staff, Students and Parents both inside and out side College. A Confidential Report compiled in as brief a manner and time as possible and yet running in to 80 pages was handed over to the Bishop in view of its sensitive nature to enable him to take such steps as he may see fit with all the urgency the circumstances demanded. Suffice it is to state that we were able to douse a fairly explosive situation and have neutralized certain factors that could have brought to a complete halt all educational activities at Guru. We do not wish to go in to detail and the Report is continued to be kept confidential at the request of the Bishop. We are however prepared to discuss certain aspects contained therein at the appropriate time, only with a view for the betterment of College.

We are still operating on a clear assurance given that no precipitate action would be taken by those quarters and we are doing everything possible to expedite the taking of remedial measures so that the Administration at Guru can be put back on the correct track, College is resuscitated and once more on course to achieve the ideals and objectives set forth by the Founding Fathers. This in our view has been our greatest achievement and are gratified that eminent Old Boys and the Pioneers of the OBA have commended us having read our Report, understood our mission appreciated our commitment and encouraged us in our activities etc. **THIS SATISFIES US IMMENSELY.**

The Junior Dormitories which need repairs are to be attended to by our Members during the December vacation provided the General Elections in early December as well as bad weather do not preclude or discourage the painting and labour factors.

A Hockey Coaching Camp combined with a gift of equipment in continuation of the original concept and perpetuation is planned for early January-2002.

Those are some of the activities envisaged for the immediate future. Further development and other activities will follow perhaps after a further meeting with the Bishop.

We also hope to have the Tutorial Staff at College who have been isolated for too long involved in development activities. A head start had been already been made. They have expressed the view that our timely intervention which had prevented a catastrophe has given them much solace and encouragement to work for the development of the College and the benefit of the students. Some of the Senior Members who have served for almost 20 years would have been with us today if not for certain peculiar circumstances which we do not want to mention here.

We have not been successful in having issued a Membership Card to the Members of the OBA. We have also not succeeded in having the OBA Members Directory issued to date, though work in that behalf commenced over a year ago. **WE REGRET OUR LACK OF CLOUT WITH THE OBA AND ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.**

To compensate therefor we are issuing herewith the '**62 GROUP** MEMBERSHIP CARD and the "INAUGURAL ISSUE" of our Directory both compiled and completed within **48 hours** and issued on the occasion of our Fellowship Dinner today which itself was organized and finalized in less than 2 weeks. We hope you find this Directory useful. There may be errors and omissions. Please bring them to our notice together with particulars of other old boys who belong to this era. They will be accepted and rectified with humility. We will be updating the

Directory **AS AND WHEN SUCH INFORMATION IS NOTIFIED.** Copies issued henceforth will therefore contain information updated to the date of **SUCH ISSUE.**

Our Secretariat and Co-ordinating Office will generally function right through and we welcome any inquiry or assistance.

IN CONCLUSION WE HAVE AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE.

THE MAJOR PART OF THE '62 GROUP CONSISTS OF MEMBERS OF THE OBA.

THIS GROUP IS NOT A SPLIT OR BREAK -AWAY GROUP. IT WAS AND IS NOT ENVISAGED AS SUCH.

IT IS NOT INTENDED TO CREATE ANY ILL FEELING OR DISHARMONY WITHIN THE OBA OR TOWARDS IT. IT IS OUR GROUP THAT HAS BEEN SLIGHTED. YET WE ARE NOT DISCOURAGED. INSTEAD OUR GROUP WILL MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO STRENGTHEN THE OBA AND ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND MAKE IT THE ORGANISATION IT OUGHT TO BE. OUR MEMEBERSHIP DRIVE IS PRIMARILY DIRECTED TOWARDS THAT OBJECTIVE.

THE'62 GROUP WILL NOT BE DISHEARTENED BUT WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO MAKE THE OBA MORE EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE COLLEGE AND THE VOICE OF ALL OLD BOYS INCLUDING THOSE WHO ARE UNABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN ACTIVITIES IN FEBRUARY EVERY YEAR. TILL SUCH TIME, WE WILL CONTINUE TO ATTEND TO MATTERS IN AN EFFICIENT AND PROFESSIONAL A MANNER AS POSSIBLE. LET THE MEMBERSHIP JUDGE US ON OUR PERFORMANCE AND DETERMINE WHETHER OUR ACTIVITIES ARE USEFUL AND HELPFUL TO COLLEGE OR DETRIMENTAL AND INEFFECTIVE. IF AND WHEN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THINKS IT FIT TO CALL UPON US FOR OUR CO-OPERATION OR ASSISTANCE IT WILL BE READILY AND WHOLE HEARTEDLY GIVEN. WE FEEL THAT THE NUMEROUS LETTERS WE HAVE WRITTEN WHICH HAVE NOT BROUGHT FORTH ANY RESPONSE FOR OVER 8 MONTHS IS A SUFFICIENT BAROMETER OF OUR OFFERS.

For- The Organizing Committee.
Saturday, November 24, 2001