



# S. Thomas' College, Gurutalawa

## OLD BOYS ASSOCIATION

### NEWSLETTER No.11

March 2007

#### **Re-Union Celebrations and AGM, 2007**

The Re-Union Celebrations were held during the weekend, February 23-25, 2007, at STC Gurutalawa, with the AGM on Saturday, 24, at 6.30 pm, attended by 73 Members. The following Members were elected uncontested to the Ex-Co.

Senior Vice President	Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe
Vice Presidents	Mr. N.D.U. Kuru Utumpala, Mr. S. Rajmohan Mr. Chandana De Silva
Secretary	Mr. Shervon Fernando
Treasurer	Mr. Ranjit Lowe
Asst. Secretary	Mr. Athula Kumaranayake
Asst. Treasurer	Mr. Nihal Wanniarachchi
Members	Mr. Anil Wickremaratne, Mr. Buddhika Kurukularatne, Mr.A.C.M.Rashid, Mr. Panini Edirisinhe, Mr. Wansapriya Gunaseela., Mr. Kenneth Gurusinghe, Mr. S. Suresh Kumar, Mr. P. Dhayabaran, Mr. S. Kaviharana, Mr. Pubudu Gunasekera

At the first Ex-Co Meeting of 2007/2008, held on March 13, 2007, the following Members were appointed.

Brig. Bandu Munasinghe	)	Co-opted under Rule 9(2) b
Mr. P.J.Fernando	)	-- do --
Mr. Rizvi Jalill	)	-- do --
Mr. Hermon Fernando	)	-- do --
Lt. Col. Harin Walgama	)	-- do --
Mr. Sumedha Perera	)	Appointed under Rule 9(3)

The cricket match, Old Boys vs. Present Boys was the main feature on Saturday morning, followed by the usual dip in the pool, to wet themselves outside, having already been quite wet inside, at the festivities at the grounds.

Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe had returned to Sri Lanka after two years and as mentioned in the Notice of the AGM, he took charge of the food at the Re-Union Celebrations to satisfy those who had complained heavily about the fare provided in the previous two years. The menus included, buriyani, tandoori chicken, fish ambulthiyal, tempered/fried dry fish as specialties, never served in the past, along with a variety of vegetables, salads and the traditional dhal curry and pol sambol. Kiribath and string hoppers were additions to the normal bread and pol sambol breakfast. Dessert included watalappan, jelly, fruit salad with ice cream, bananas (kolikuttu, seeni kesel and ambul) and pineapple. Boiled and tempered gram and devilled chicken, were served as bites at the cricket match and the Fellowship on Saturday evening. Saturday afternoon tea included patties, cakes and fish rolls. "5 star hotel food" was the general comment heard everywhere.

**The Re-Union Celebrations and the AGM, 2008 are expected to be held during the third weekend of February (15-17), 2008 and we request the overseas Members to save the date, to be present on this special occasion.**

#### **Current Situation at College**

The Headmaster, Mr. E.G.J. Canagasabey, resigned at the end of January 2007, to take up the post of Vice Principal of Trinity College, Kandy. We take this opportunity to wish him all the best in his new assignment. Mr. Jacques Huyghebaert, a Belgian financial/marketing expert, with much international exposure, married to a Sri Lankan and living in Bandarawela, has been accepted by the Board of Governors recently, to take charge of managing the affairs of the school on an honorary basis. He is currently covering the duties of the Headmaster as well and proving to be a great success in solving many day to day problems which the previous Headmasters had failed to tackle over the years. He is

learning fast, including understanding the various issues the OBA brought to the notice of the Board a few years ago. At the AGM, he confidently briefed the Members on his marketing plans, to absorb more students.

A Task Force for STC Gurutalawa has been formed by His Lordship, Rev. Duleep De Chickera, with several Members of the Board of Governors, including Mr. Christo Gonawala, the Manager for STC Gurutalawa, Mr. Huyghebaert and the Senior Vice President of the OBA. Mr. Mahen Ranasinghe, the Senior Vice President attended the first two Meetings (the last one on March 7). We understand that Rev. Mark Bilimoria, currently the parish priest at Mirihana, will be appointed as the new Headmaster in June this year. He is an Old Boy of STC Mount Lavinia, of the era of Warden Neville De Alwis.

At this Meeting, Mr. Huyghebaert explained his marketing plan to attract students, by advertising in the press locally, approaching planters, mainly in the hill country and advertising in the Middle East for children of those Sri Lankans working there.

Mr Mahen Ranasinghe had explained that the OBA had taken a back seat in the recent past, having built the new dining hall with the help of a few Old Boys, spent millions in developing the infrastructure, establishing a computer centre and helping to improve discipline and the standard of English. The OBA had obtained over Rs.6.5 million of the 2005 Thomian Fair income, for the College, but this had only helped to clear the bank overdrafts and some outstanding debts.

He had thanked the Board of Governors for finally taking direct and positive action, by appointing a European, an outsider without prejudices who was able to assess the situation objectively and was already proving to be a great success; and also for the efforts to appoint a Headmaster with proper credentials, for the revival of the College.

While appreciating the efforts of Mr. Huyghebaert, he had stressed the importance of improving discipline and the standard of English, along with improving the hostel facilities and developing sports, to hold back the students, as it had been found that in the past, students left as soon as they found better schools. In this regard, large funds would be required and Mr. Ranasinghe had proposed that --

1. The farm be developed, on a commercial basis, with cattle, chicken, vegetables, fruits and even sheep, managed by a Committee headed by the OBA. This would certainly satisfy the only condition laid down by Mr. Leslie De Saram when he donated his farm to start the College during the Second World War – that the agriculture facilities should be maintained.
2. A Master Plan be prepared, detailing farm development and infrastructure development, coupled with improvement in standards of discipline, English and sports, eradicating malpractices and corruption to convince the Members of the OBA that any funds given to College would not be wasted.

The result of this proposal was that Mr. Ranasinghe had been asked to prepare the Master Plan. The Ex-Co is giving top priority to this and the Members will be kept informed of the developments.

In response to the press advertisements, Mr. Huyghebaert had received 340 enquiries and 149 students have been found acceptable and earmarked, after processing 247 applications. 20 have already joined, making the total number 291 at present. With the balance joining in the second term, commencing May 7, the total would be 420. This is certainly a record, in that the numbers were around 400 in 2001, gradually decreasing over the years to around 250.

Mr. Huyghebaert is already turning his theories to practice and we understand that the most immediate requirement would be the bunk beds to accommodate the increased intake. Some urgent work, such as refurbishment of toilets, painting, replacement of swimming pool equipment, is planned during the April holidays and any help individually or from OBAs abroad would be much appreciated.

#### **Ex-Co Plans for the Year**

The Ex-Co held their first Meeting of the year, on March 13, 2007 and Sub-Committees were formed for preparation of the master plan, farm development, membership and directory, Fellowship Dinner, family outing, finance, newsletter and advertising, turf wicket, surveying and improving buildings at College.

The intention is to organize a family outing on a Saturday or Sunday in June and the Fellowship Dinner at Mount Lavinia Hotel in September.

Mr. Gerald De Alwis, a former Board Member and a Manager of STC Gurutalawa has worked hard in reviving the interest of the Cricket Association of Sri Lanka to redevelop the turf wicket laid in 1998 at the grounds, with the view to using it for matches in the Uva Province. The Ex-Co will be taking a keen interest in this connection.

There will be a membership drive locally and overseas and the support of every Old Boy is needed to make it a success. Please note that the Membership form is available on our website [www.stcguru.com](http://www.stcguru.com) The membership directory needs updating and Members are requested to advise the Secretary of any change in details, in particular any e-mail addresses, for easy communication. A slip is provided at the end of this report and we urge the Members to return it, completed, as a matter of urgency.

There is no major fund raising event planned at the moment and it is the intention to raise funds as necessary, through the Old Boys and well wishers, upon approval of the Master Plan.

**Website**

Our website is as above and it will be updated regularly with the latest news and photographs of events of the OBA and the College.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion it can be said that there is great hope of bringing the College back to its past glory and we kindly request all Old Boys to rally round to help the College in this crucial year.



Shervon Fernando  
Hony. Secretary

-----  
Please complete and return to Hony. Secretary, Mr. Shervon Fernando, 78/2, Kumaragewatte, Pelawatta, Battaramulla by post, Fax: 011 5538 537 or e mail to [printogr@sltnet.lk](mailto:printogr@sltnet.lk)

Name: -----

Occupation: -----

Address (Office): -----  
-----

Telephone (Office): -----

Address (Home): -----  
-----

Telephone (Home): ----- Mobile: -----

E- mail: -----

Period in College -----